BIG COMICS SPECIAL

運命の鳥

高橋留美子傑作集

高橋留美子

Takahashi Rumiko

BOOK DESIGN◉TAKAHASHI JUNZI

BIG COMICS SPECIAL

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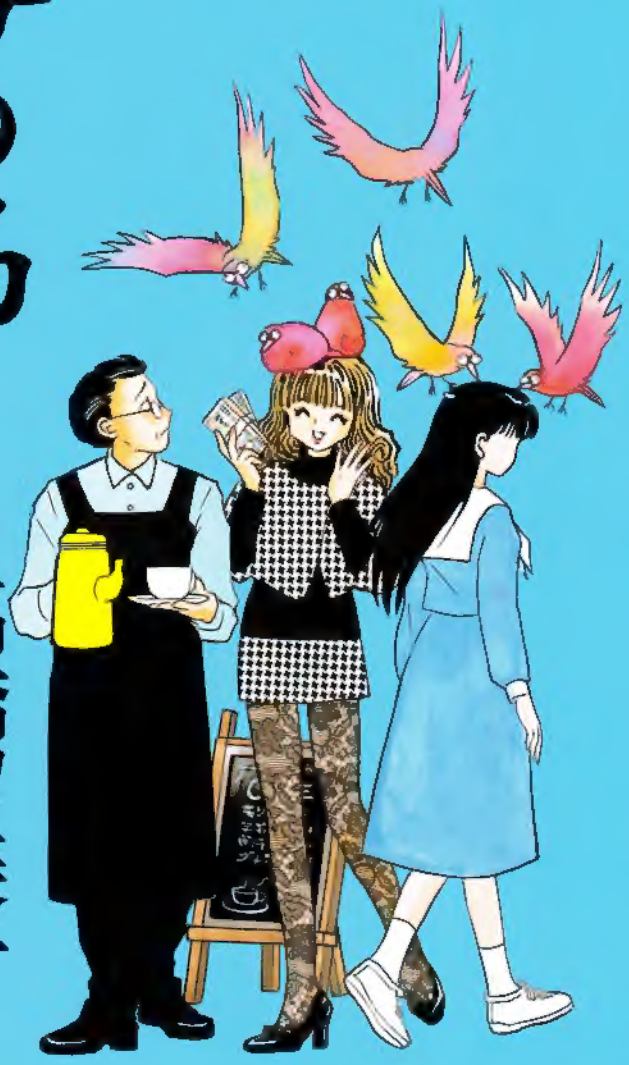

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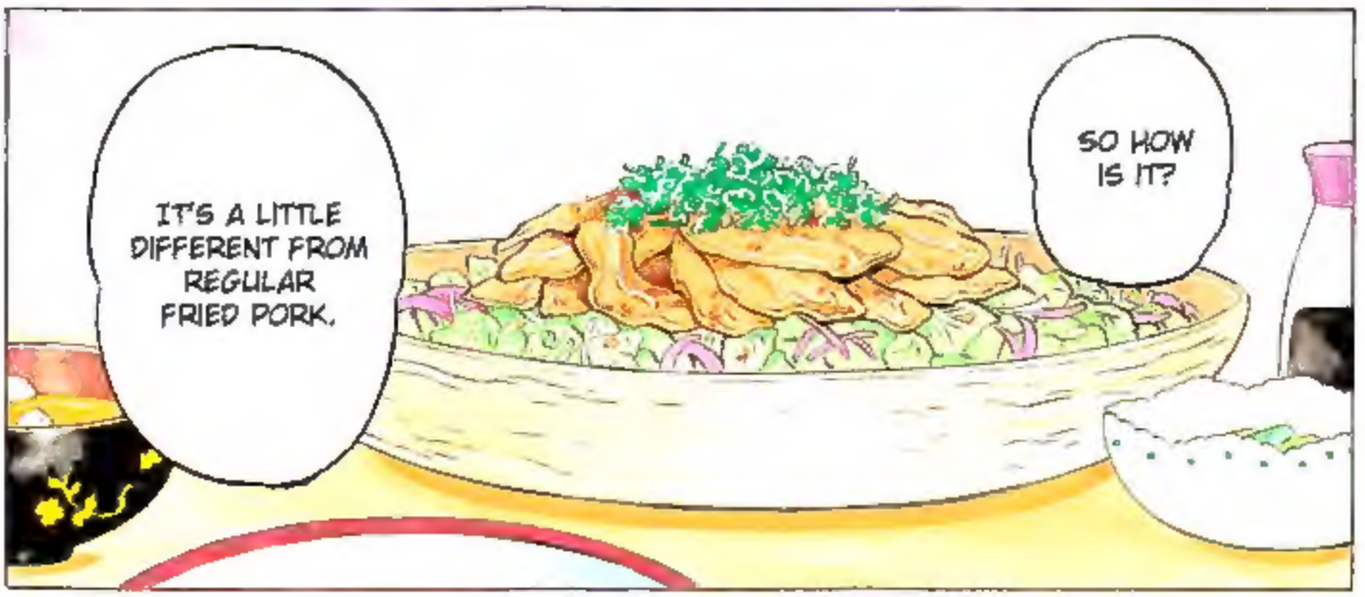
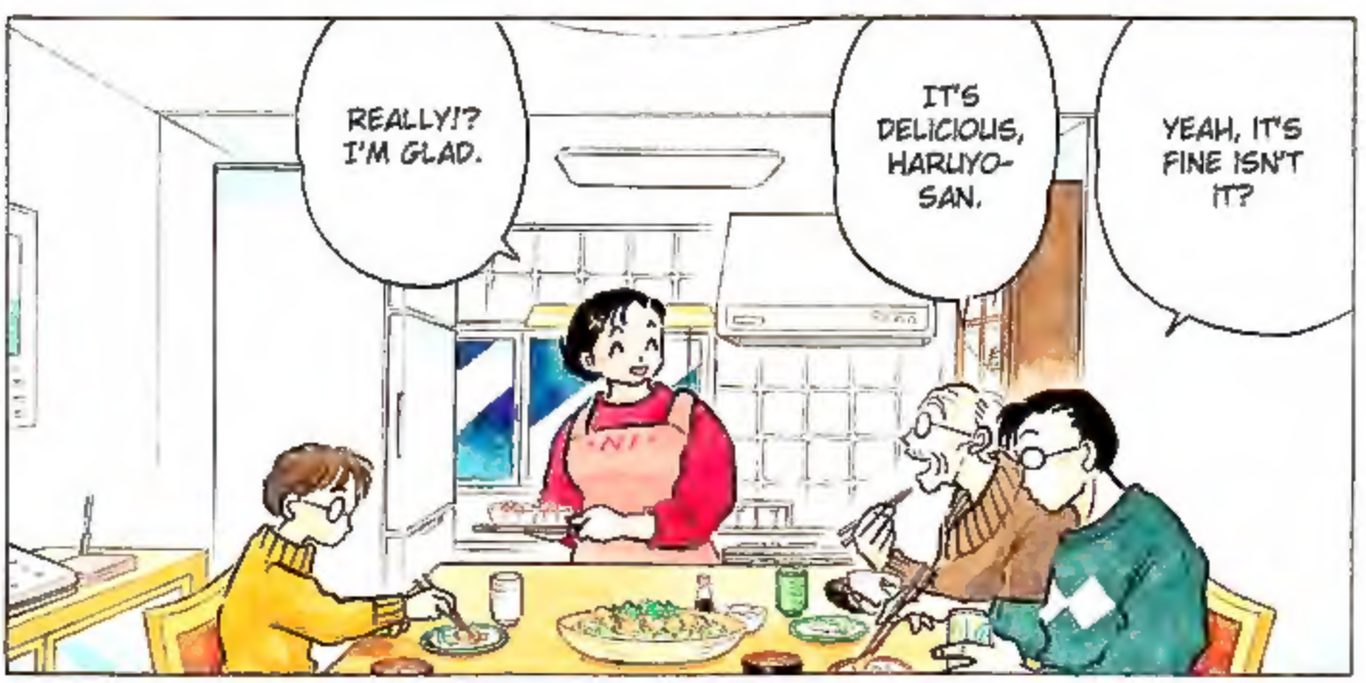
POSITIVE COOKING

Honestly speaking, anything is fine.

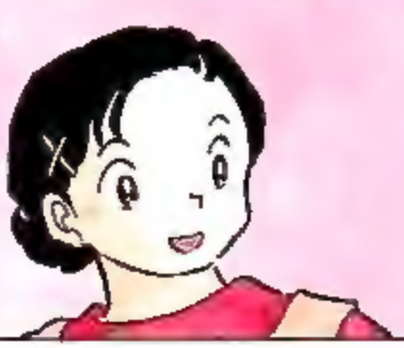




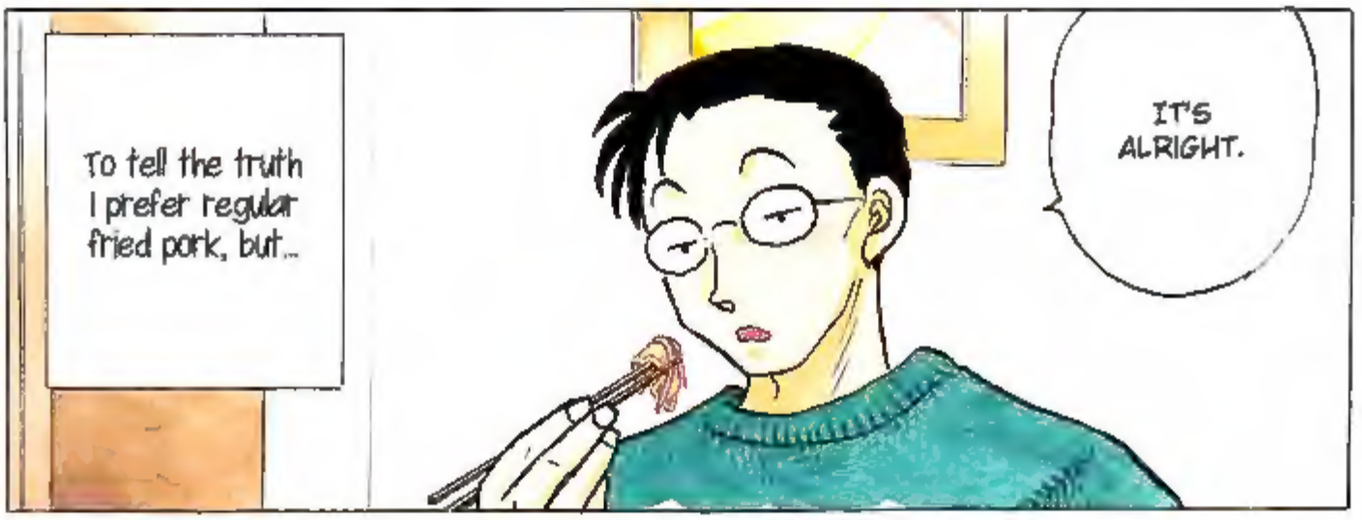
2

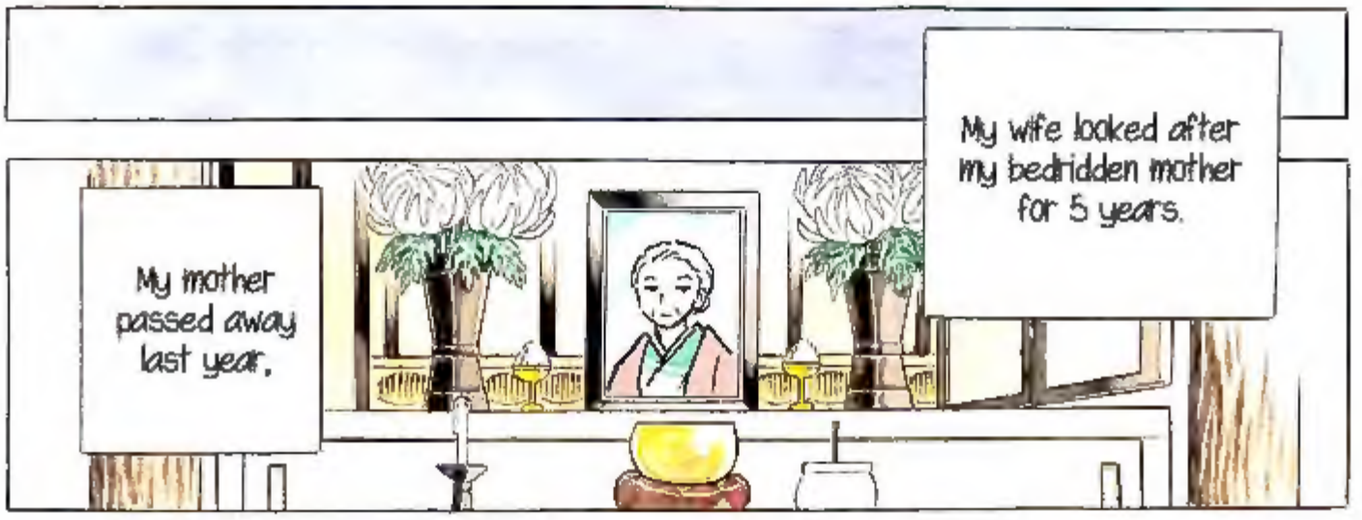
IT'S SOMETHING I PICKED UP IN CLASS.

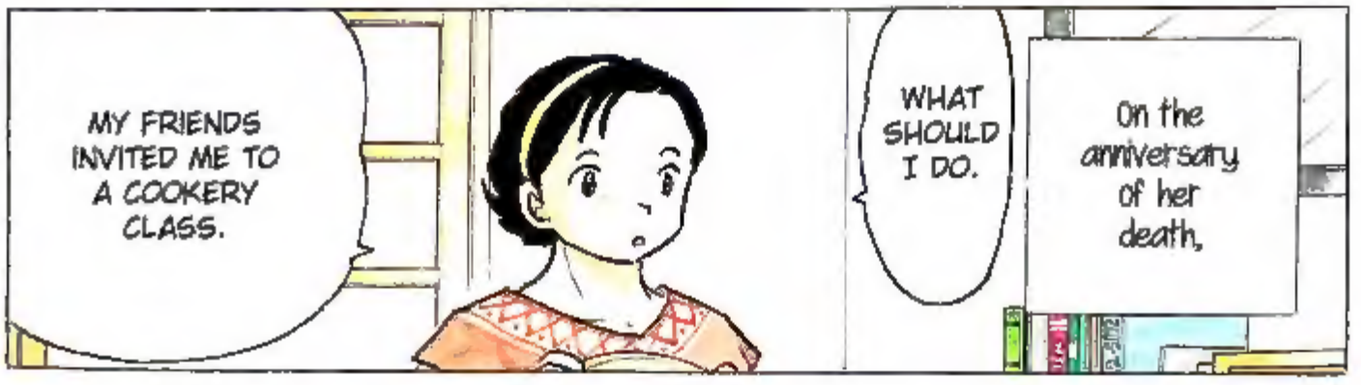
I TRIED TO GIVE IT AN ETHNIC FLAVOR.



My wife recently started going to cooking classes.


To tell the truth I prefer regular fried pork, but...
IT'S ALRIGHT.

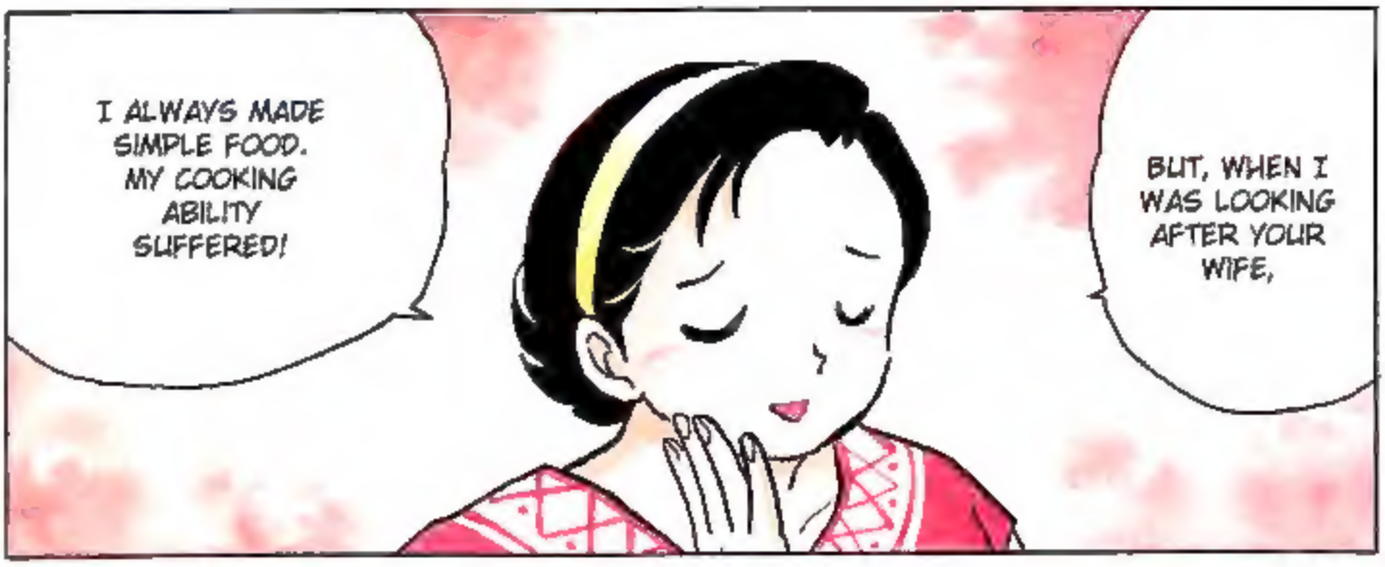

My mother passed away last year.
My wife looked after my bedridden mother for 5 years.

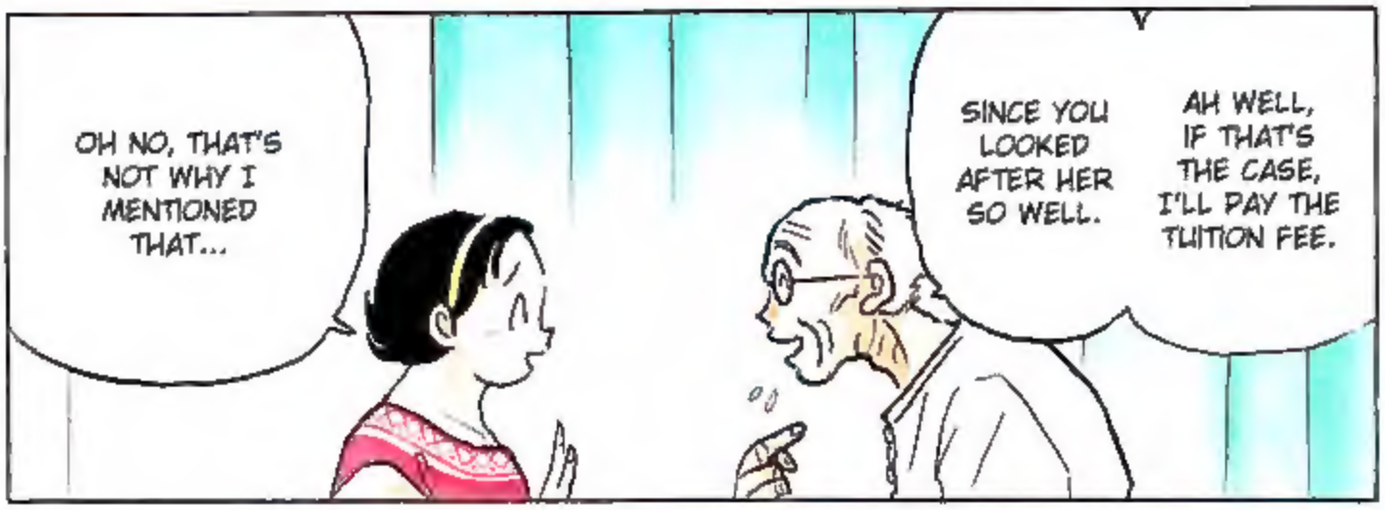

MY FRIENDS INVITED ME TO A COOKERY CLASS.
WHAT SHOULD I DO.
On the anniversary of her death,

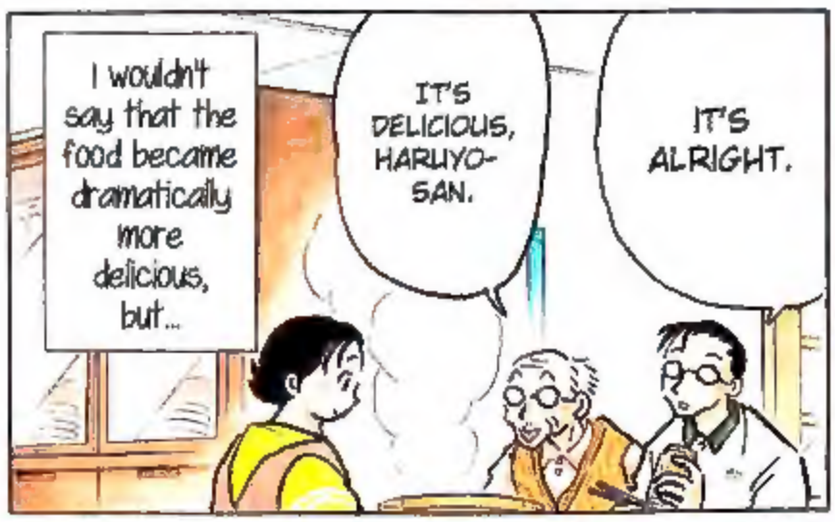
3

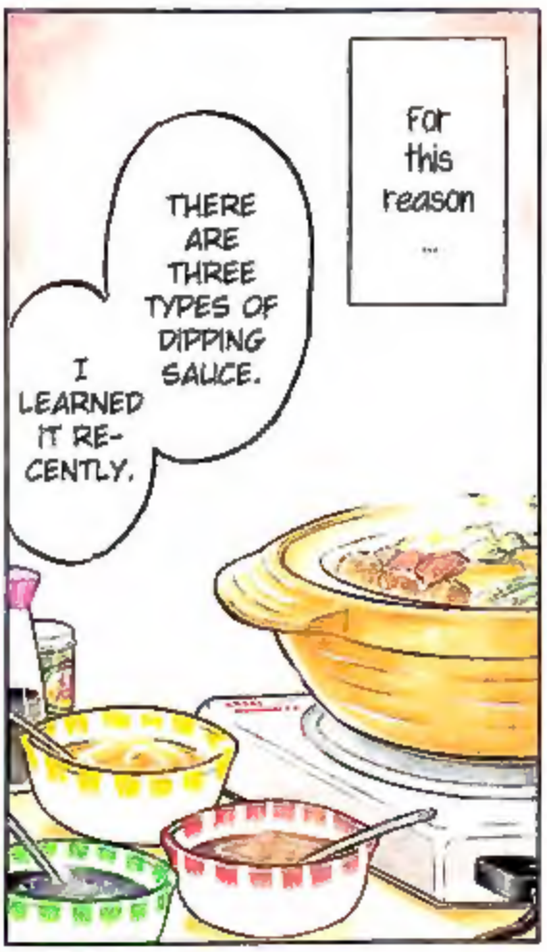
THAT MAKES ME HAPPY!
REALLY ?
BUT HARUYO-SAN, YOU DON'T NEED LESSONS. YOUR COOKING IS ALREADY DELICIOUS.

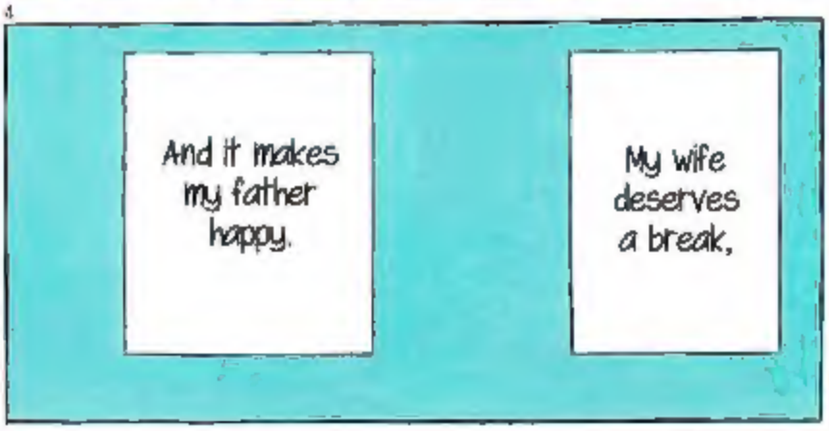
BUT CAN WE AFFORD IT?
IT'S FINE ISN'T IT? IF YOU WANT TO GO.

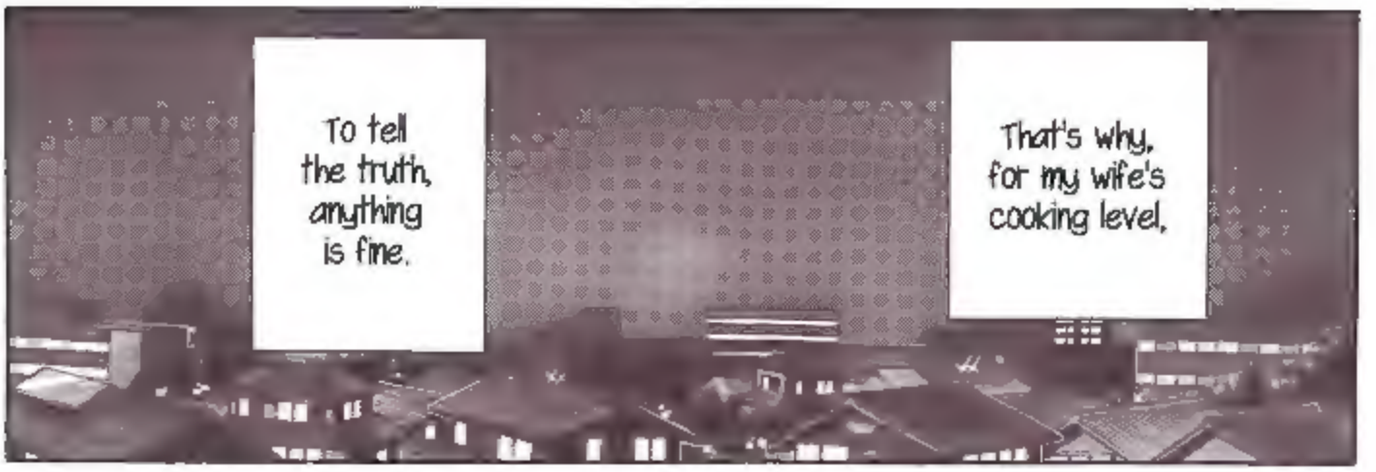

I ALWAYS MADE SIMPLE FOOD. MY COOKING ABILITY SUFFERED!
BUT, WHEN I WAS LOOKING AFTER YOUR WIFE,


OH NO, THAT'S NOT WHY I MENTIONED THAT...
SINCE YOU LOOKED AFTER HER SO WELL.
AH WELL, IF THAT'S THE CASE, I'LL PAY THE TUITION FEE.

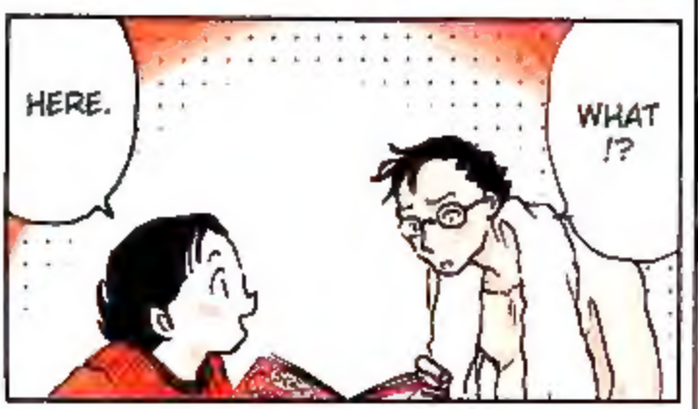

I wouldn't say that the food became dramatically more delicious, but...
IT'S DELICIOUS, HARUYO-SAN.
IT'S ALRIGHT.

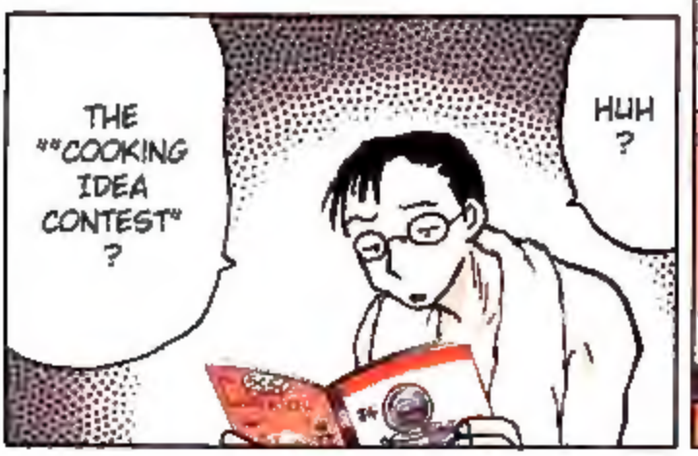

For this reason ...
THERE ARE THREE TYPES OF DIPPING SAUCE.
I LEARNED IT RE-CENTLY.

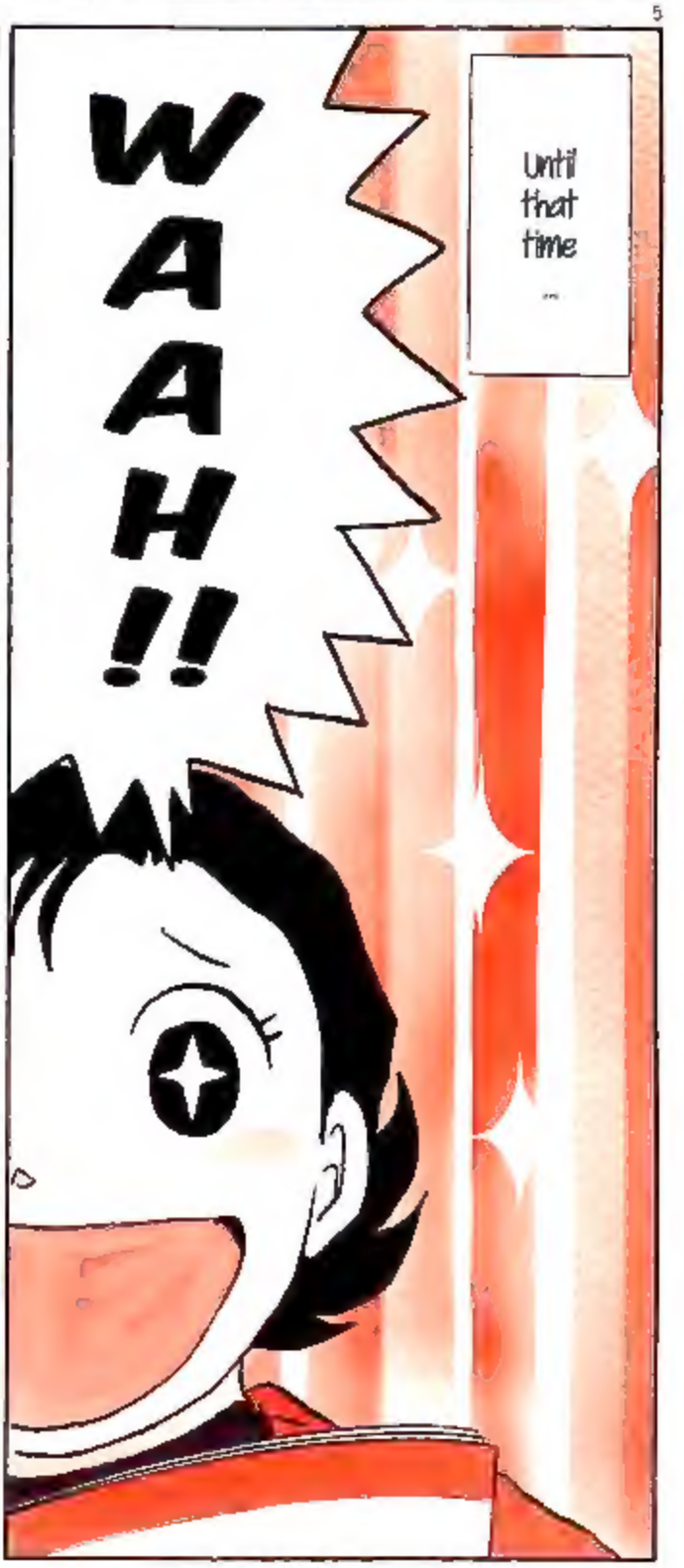

And it makes my father happy.
My wife deserves a break.


To tell the truth, anything is fine.
That's why, for my wife's cooking level,

THEY PRINTED IT.
OH MY, I CAN'T BELIEVE IT.
WHAT'S GOING ON?


HERE.
WHAT !?


THE ""COOKING IDEA CONTEST" ?
HUH ?

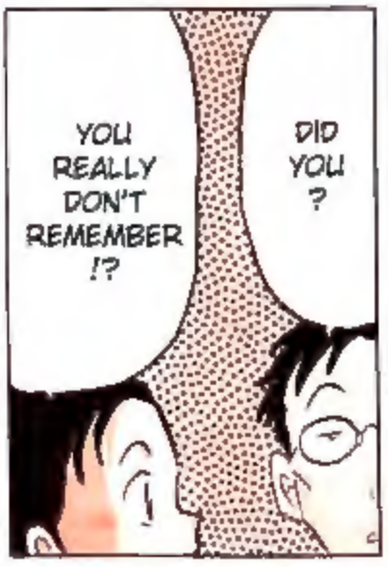

WAAH!!
Until that time ...

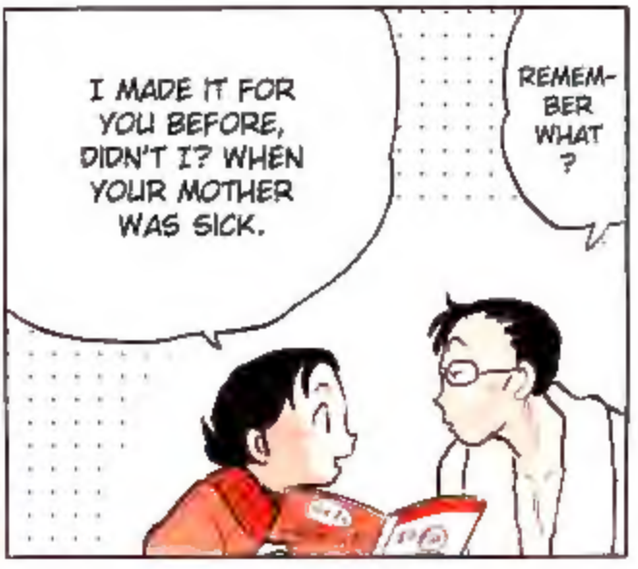
SIMPLE COOKING AWARD

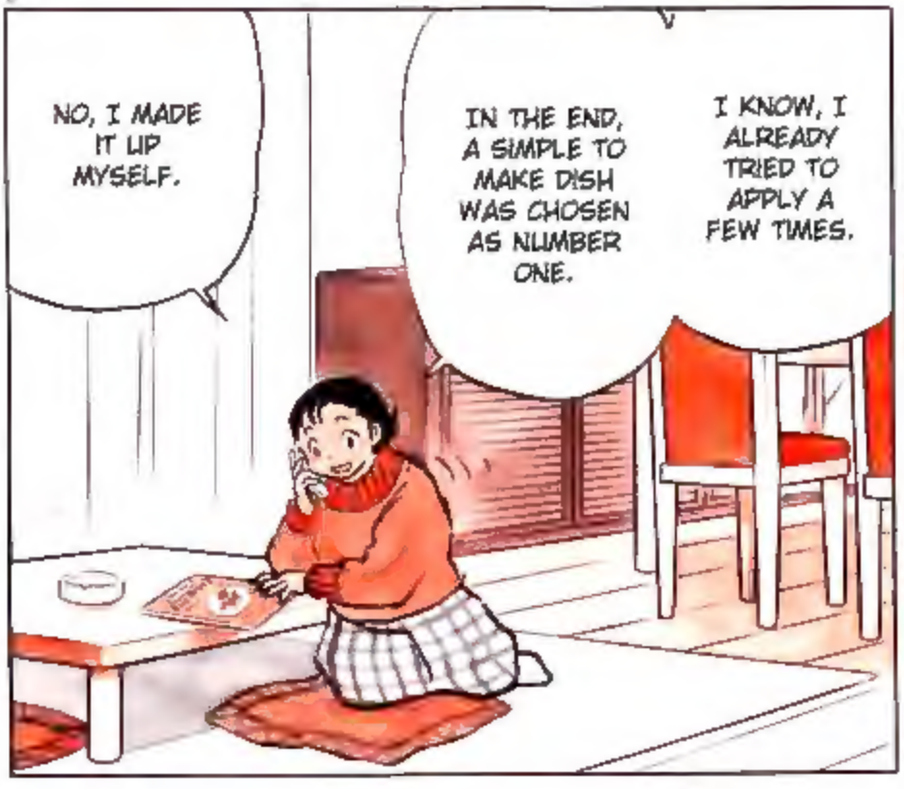
SPRING ONION AND TUNA CHINESE DUMPLINGS
HARUYO HARA (TOKYO)

INGREDIENTS
- 1 PACK RAW TUNA
- SHISO LEAF
- TAKENOKO (BOILED AND CHOPPED)
- SOY SAUCE IF DESIRED.
- PREMADE DUMPLING SKINS.
- PONZU DIPPING SAUCE.

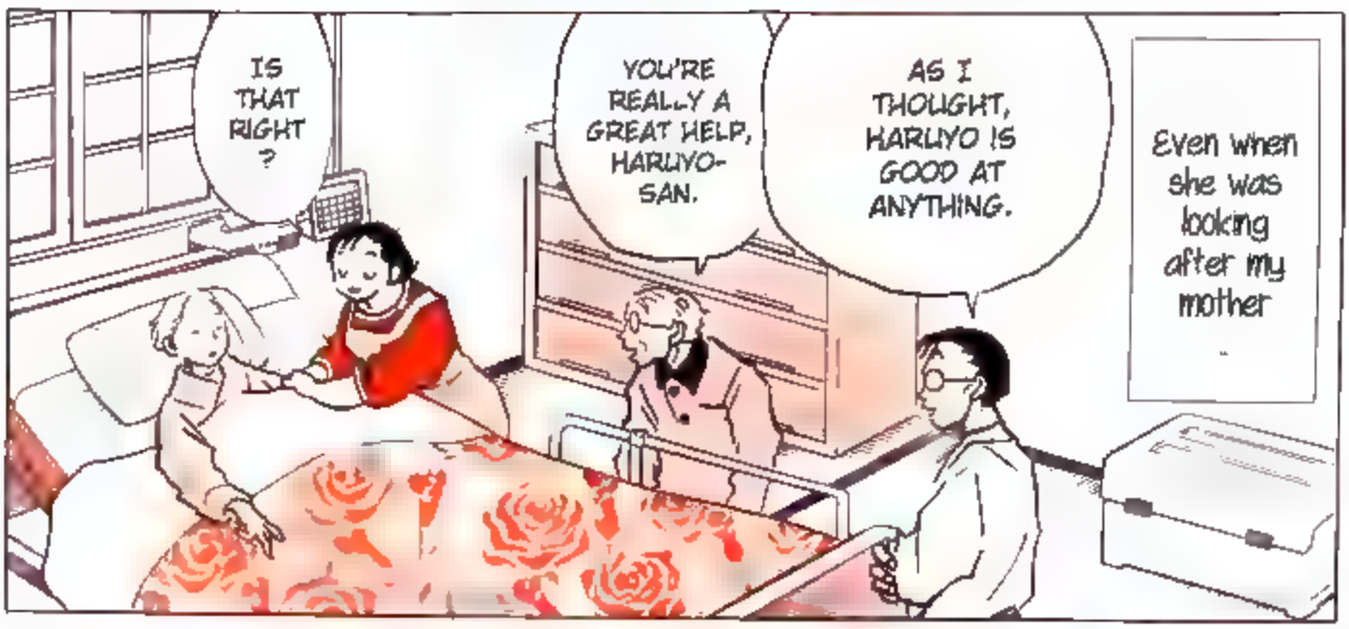
NOTE: SIMPLE TO MAKE, AND HEALTHIER THAN MEAT

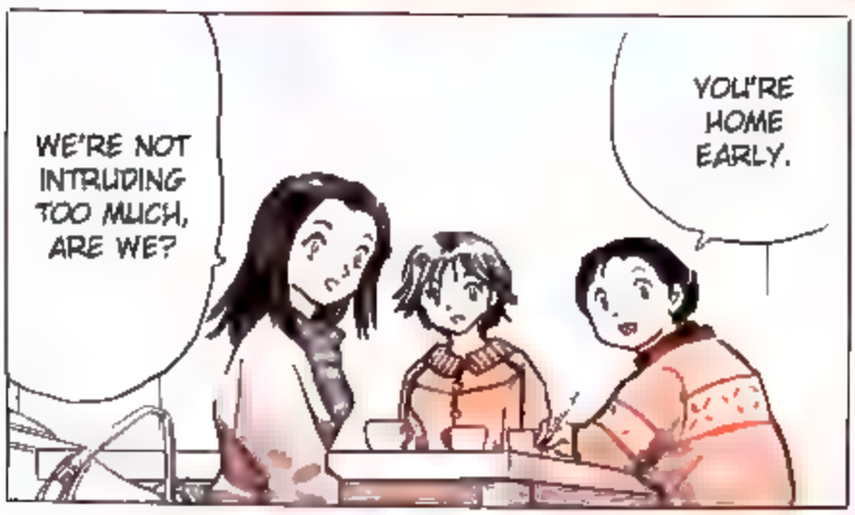


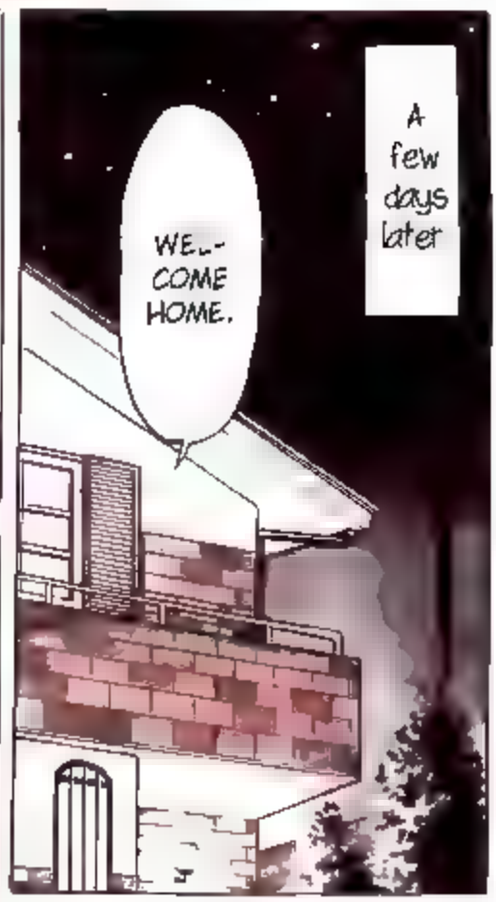


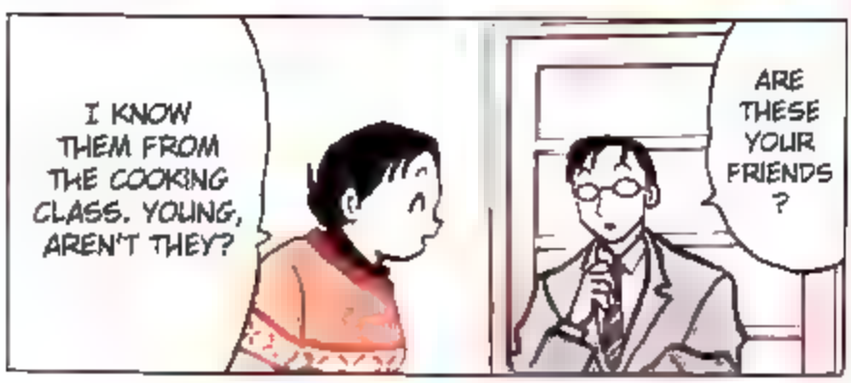


My wife is the kind of woman who gets easily carried away by flattery.
I'M A NATURAL COOK? I'M SO HAPPY TO HEAR THAT!
I THOUGHT OF IT WHEN I WAS LOOKING AFTER HIS MOTHER.


IS THAT RIGHT ?
YOU'RE REALLY A GREAT HELP, HARUYO-SAN.
AS I THOUGHT, HARUYO IS GOOD AT ANYTHING.
Even when she was looking after my mother


WE'RE NOT INTRUDING TOO MUCH, ARE WE?
YOU'RE HOME EARLY.

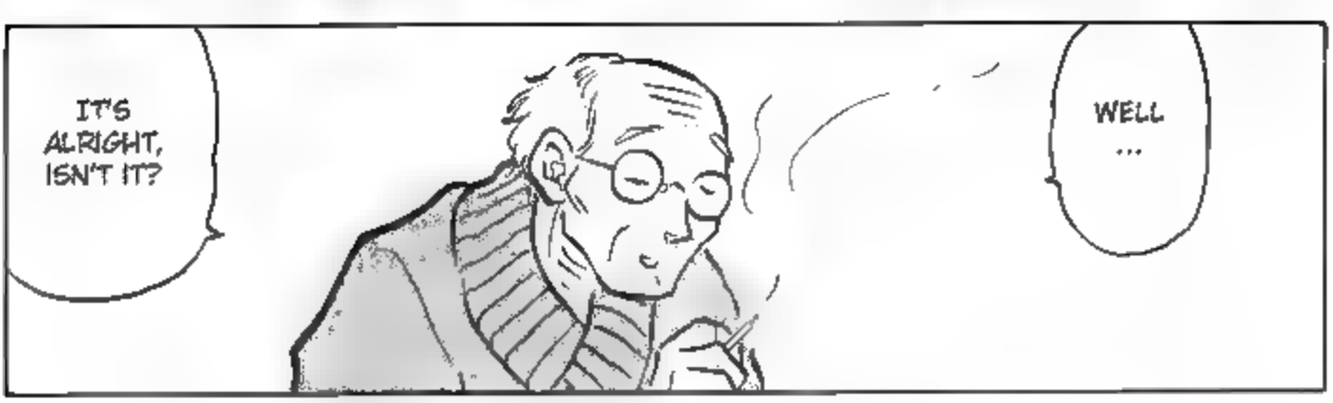

A few days later
WEL-- COME HOME.


I KNOW THEM FROM THE COOKING CLASS. YOUNG, AREN'T THEY?
ARE THESE YOUR FRIENDS ?

YEAH.
JUST SOME SIMPLE RECIPES.
YOU WERE TEACHING THEM COOKING?
PLEASE COME AGAIN.
YOU HELPED US A LOT!
THANKS, HARU-SAN.
THEY SAID THAT THE COOKING AT THE COOKERY CLASS IS TOO COMPLICATED. AND THEY'RE TOO BUSY.
THEY'RE STILL NOT SO GOOD AT COOKING.
DESPITE BEING NEWLY-WEDS,
Since then ...
WELL... IT'S FINE, ISN'T IT?
IS IT ALRIGHT IF I INVITE THEM AROUND OCCASIONALLY?
HELLO.
Almost every week.

WE'LL BE GOING HOME SOON.
SORRY, WE CAME AGAIN!
OH, WELCOME HOME.
NOT AGAIN.

SHOULD I TELL HER THIS IS TOO MUCH?
.....
EAT IN HERE, SHINICHI.
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE ...


IT'S ALRIGHT, ISN'T IT?
WELL ...

9

IF IT MAKES HARUYO-SAN HAPPY, THEN ...
NOT AT ALL.
EVEN YOU CAN'T RELAX HERE.
IT'S A NUISANCE!

I GUESS I'LL HAVE TO PUT MY FOOT DOWN.
Why's he being so selfless...
AND TEACHING EVERYONE FOR FREE?
I MEAN, LETTING EVERYONE USE OUR KITCHEN ...
.....
HUH ?
UMM, DARLING... DON'T YOU THINK THAT YOU ARE TOO KIND-HEARTED?
Put my foot down ...

10

YOU TOO, HUH...
Eeh ?!?
SPARKLES
YOU THINK I COULD GET PAID TO DO THIS!?

Such a positive outlook ...
EVERYBODY LOVES THEM!
MY RECIPES ARE POPULAR WITH THE NEIGHBORING HOUSEWIVES.
IT COULD HAPPEN.
I MEAN, YOUR COOKING IS SO SIMPLE, ANYONE CAN MAKE IT.
HMM, I WONDER.
Hold on...
CAN I REALLY START A TEACHING CLASSROOM?
ZZZZ
HUH, YOU AREN'T LISTENING.
I WONDER IF YOU COULD CHARGE MONEY FOR LESSONS.
IN OTHER WORDS, ANYONE COULD THINK IT UP TOO.

LEFTOVERS PRIZE

MIZUNA LEAF PASTA WITH TOFU STEAK

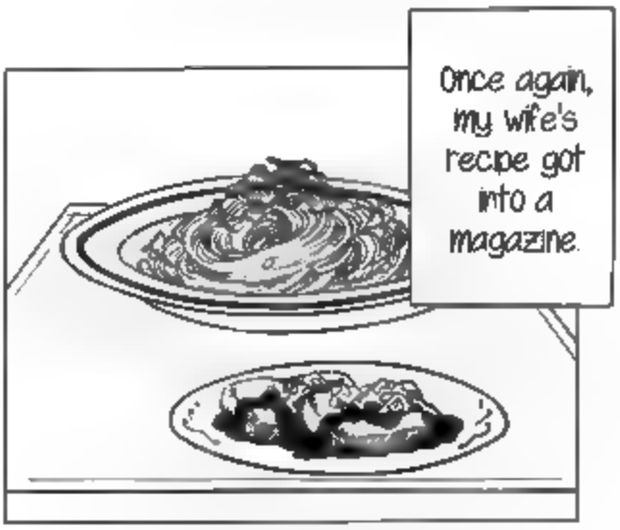
HARUYO HARA (TOKYO)

◎ PASTA (THIN TYPE)

Ⓐ MIZUNA, MAITAKE MUSHROOMS, BACON, PINE NUTS, 1/2 CLOVE GARLIC] COOK WITH Ⓑ

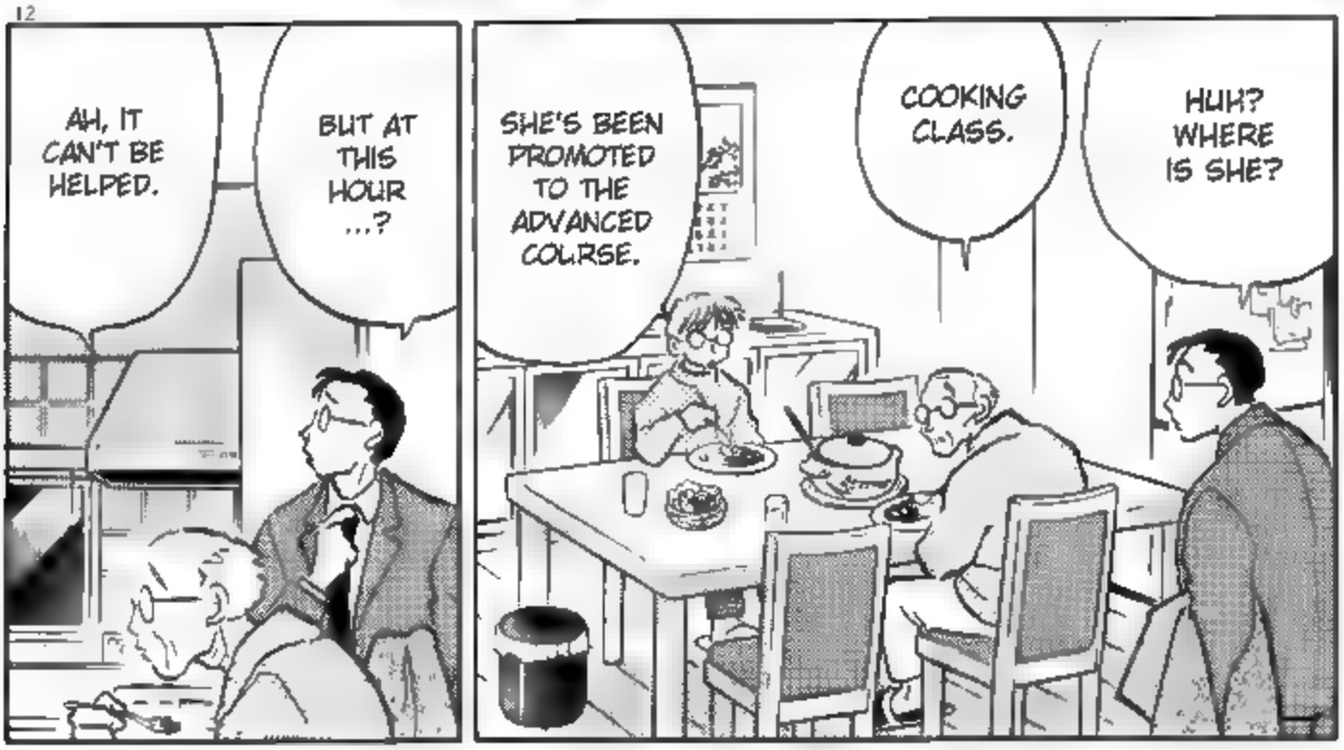
Ⓑ ADD BUTTER, SOY SAUCE, OLIVE OIL, AND WHITE WINE AS DESIRED

◎ TOFU STEAK
1/2 BLOCK OF FIRM TOFU



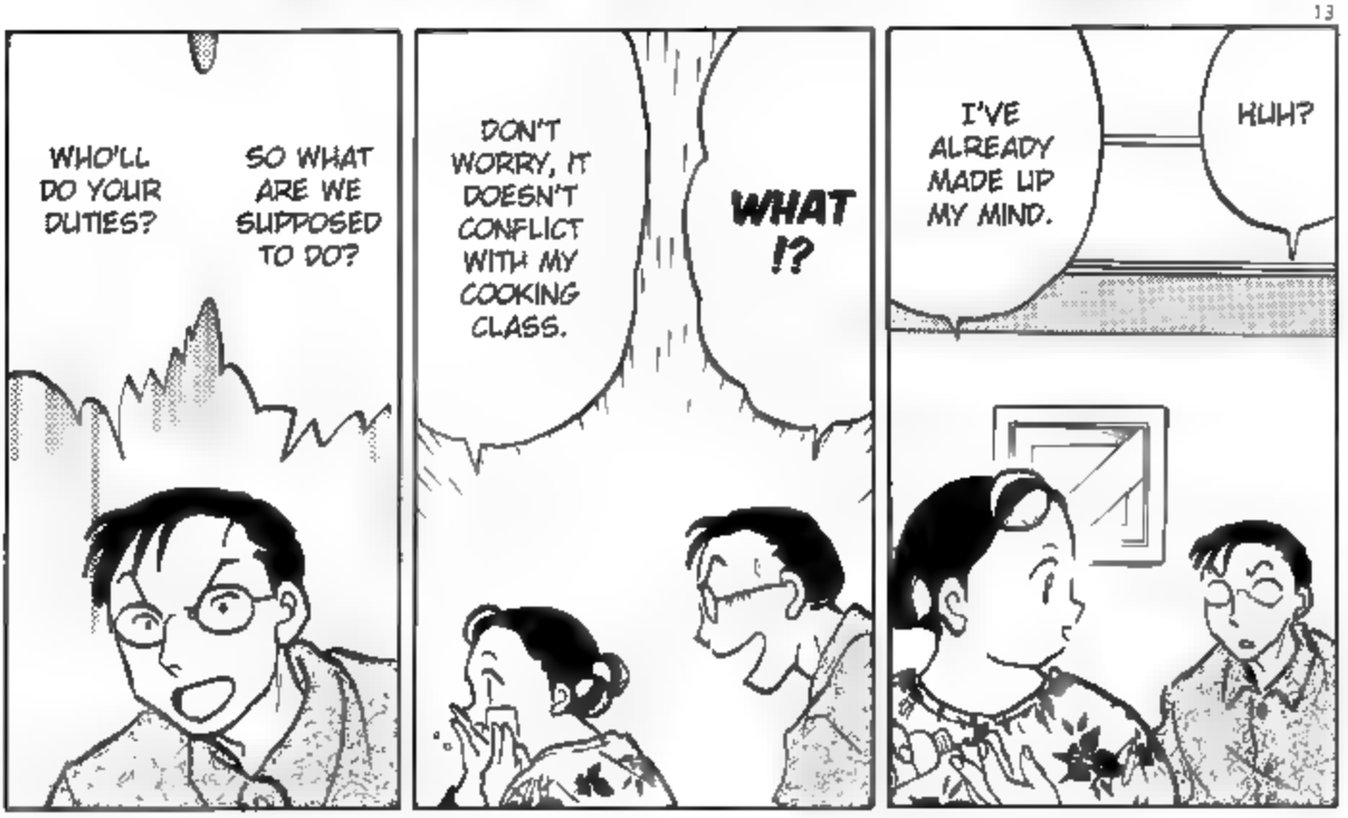
EVALUATION A VERY IMPRESSIVE USE OF LEFTOVER INGREDIENTS! HITS THE SPOT EVEN WITHOUT MEAT OR FISH!

12



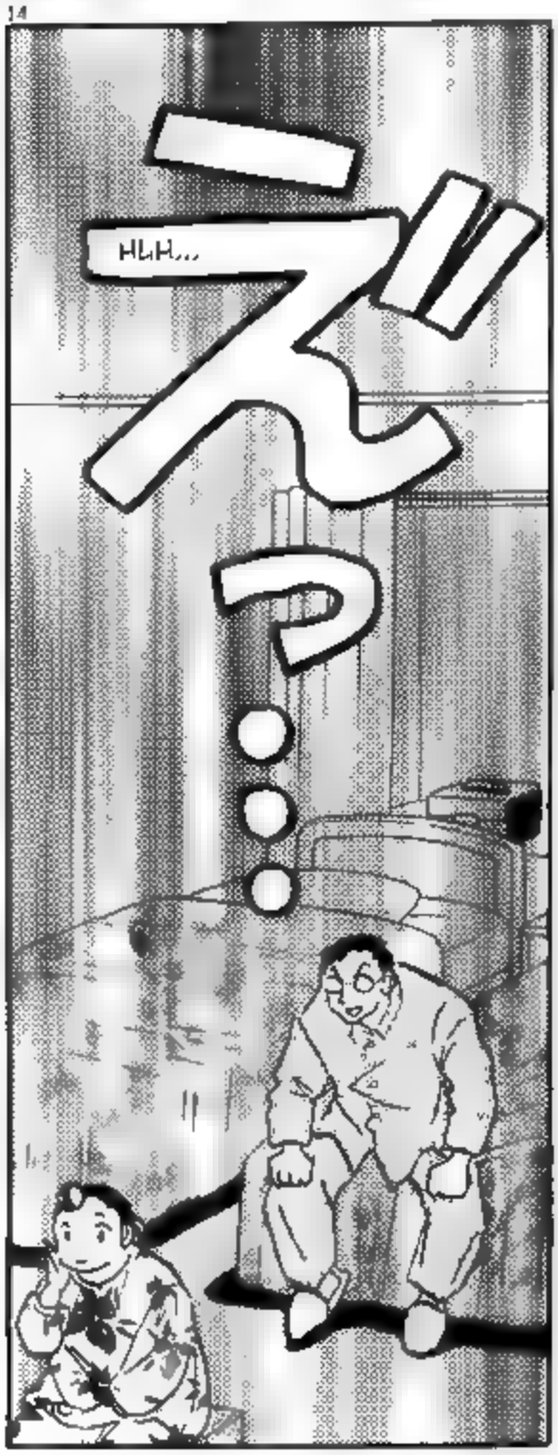
AH, THAT REMINDS ME.
BUT YOU'RE GOING TO THE COOKING CLASS LATE AT NIGHT ...
YEAH, SOMEHOW I FEEL REALLY MOTIVATED.
HEY, IT'S FINE THAT YOU LIKE COOKING, BUT C'MON.
AT A DELICA-TESSEN.
WHAT IF I HAD A PART TIME JOB?

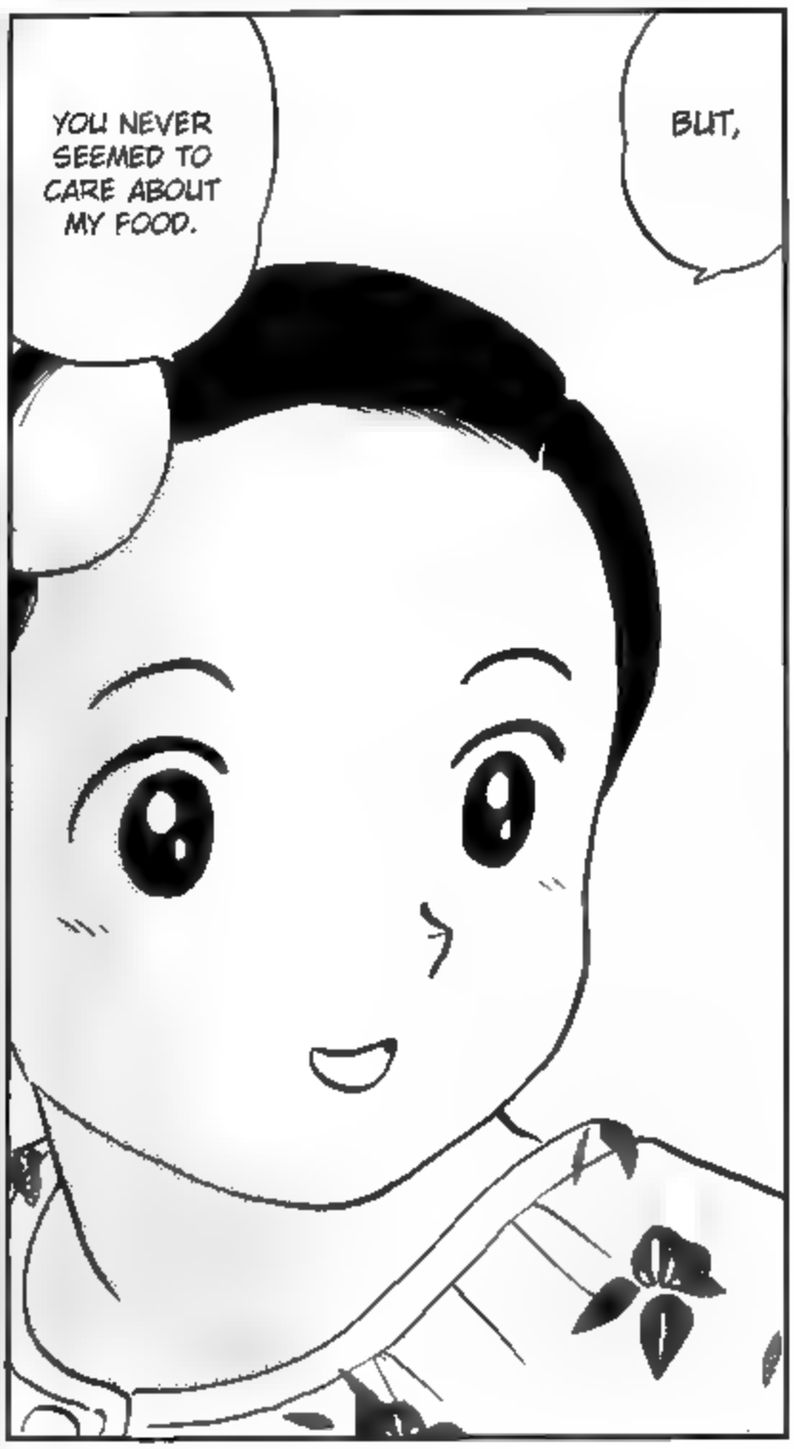
13


WHO'LL DO YOUR DUTIES?
SO WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO?
DON'T WORRY, IT DOESN'T CONFLICT WITH MY COOKING CLASS.
WHAT !?
I'VE ALREADY MADE UP MY MIND.
HUH?

IF YOU START MAKING THEM OUTSIDE, THEN THINGS WILL GET MORE...
BEEN NOTHING BUT YOUR SIMPLE RECIPES !?
HAVEN'T MEALS IN HERE RECENTLY

14


HUH...
イヤ!!

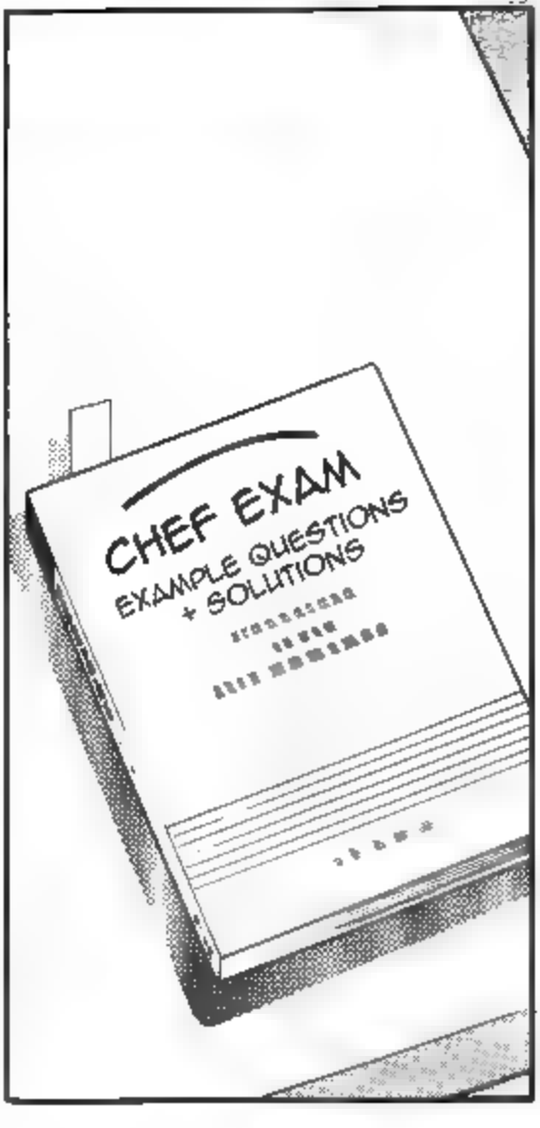

YOU NEVER SEEMED TO CARE ABOUT MY FOOD.
BUT,

AH, IT'S FINE.
WHOOSH
DRIP DRIP
THAT'S NOT WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT.
HOW RIDICU-LOUS.
WHAT-WHAT ARE YOU SAYING.

Where is my wife going with this?
I don't know

A CHEF EXAM ...?
WHAT !?

REALLY !?
FLIP FLIP
SHE INTENDS TO GO AS FAR AS TO GET A LICENCE?


CHEF EXAM
EXAMPLE QUESTIONS + SOLUTIONS

2) PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

BEFORE ESTABLISHING A BUSINESS, 2 YEARS OF PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE IS REQUIRED

① 寄宿舎，学校，病院，事業所などの給食施設

② 飲食店営業（一般食堂，料理店，すし屋，そば[illegible]スト

ハ，キャバレ　など客に飲食させる営業）

③ 魚介類販売業（店舗を設け鮮魚介を販売す[illegible]

④ そうざい製造業（通常副食物として供され[illegible]営業を

いう）

なお，以上の施設に勤務していてもボ　イやウ[illegible]食事サ

THE EXAMINEE'S QUALIF-ICATIONS ...

AT LEAST TWO YEARS OF PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE IS REQUIRED?

6

SHINICHI, I...

THINK SHE'S GOING TO LEAVE YOU.

WHAT IF I HAD A PART TIME JOB?

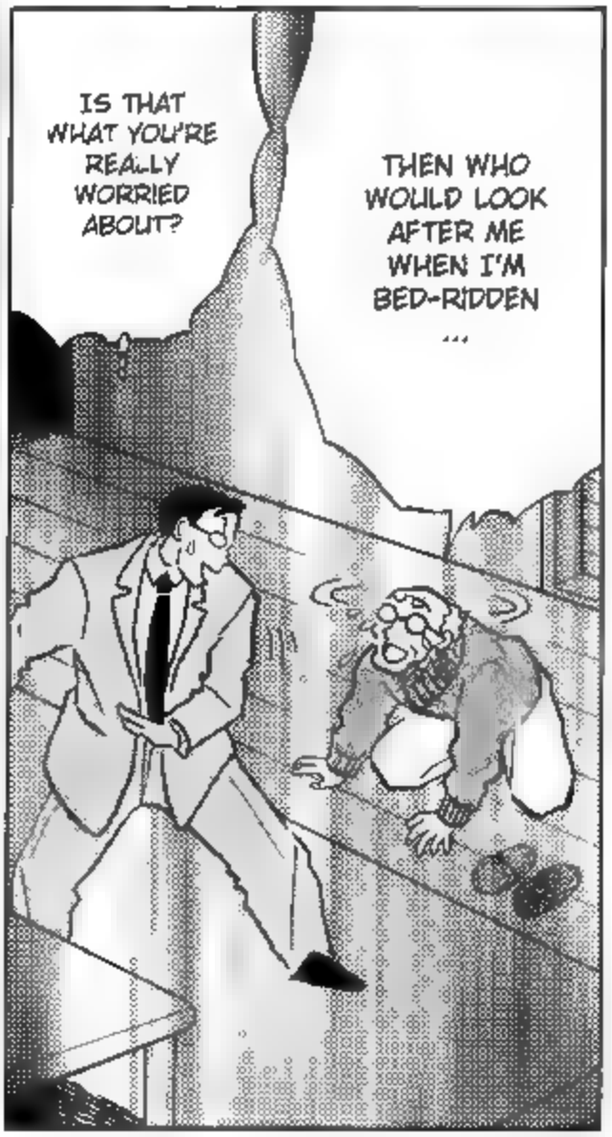
AT A DELICA-TESSEN.

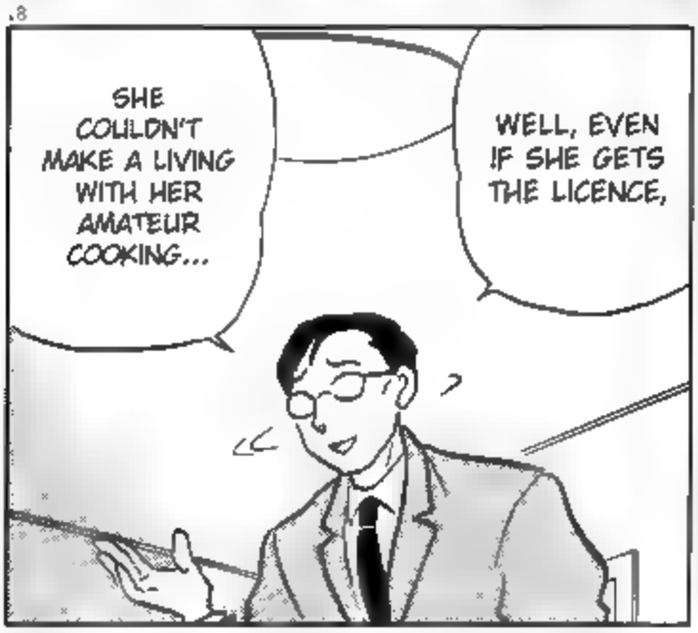
RECENTLY YOU'VE JUST BEEN LETTING HER DO WHATEVER SHE LIKES.
COM-PLAINTS ...
MAYBE SHE STILL HAS SOME COMPLAINTS, RIGHT?
ALTHOUGH HARUYO'S FACE IS SMILING,
WHA-
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING SUDDENLY, DAD?
NOT SUD-DENLY.
AT THAT TIME?
SHE LOOKED AFTER YOUR MOTHER...
WELL, BEFORE THAT
YOU TOO, I THINK ...
YOU TOOK HER FOR GRANTED.
WELL THAT'S ...
YOU DEPENDED ON HER TOO MUCH.
SO ...
MAYBE SHE DOESN'T CARE ABOUT ANYTHING NOW.

YOU'RE OVER-THINKING THIS.
RIDICU-LOUS.
SHE'S PREPARING TO MAKING A LIVING FROM COOKING THE FOOD SHE LOVES...

IN YOUR CASE, IF YOU GET DIVORCED...
MAKING SUCH A FACE.
LOOK AT YOU.

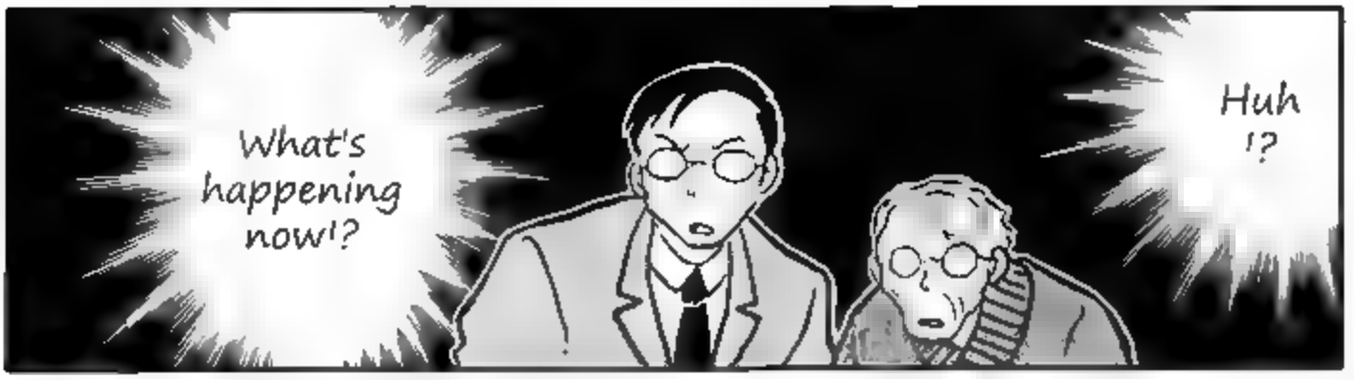
My wife isn't really the type of woman to leave home


IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE REALLY WORRIED ABOUT?
THEN WHO WOULD LOOK AFTER ME WHEN I'M BED-RIDDEN ...


SHE COULDN'T MAKE A LIVING WITH HER AMATEUR COOKING...
WELL, EVEN IF SHE GETS THE LICENCE,

SHOCK
I'M BACK.
DID SHE HEAR ANYTHING ?
N- NOTHING... MUCH.
どっどっどっどっ
THUMP THUMP
WHAT WERE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
I JUST GOT BACK.
BADUMP
どきどき
HOW .. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN THERE !?
どきどき
BADUMP

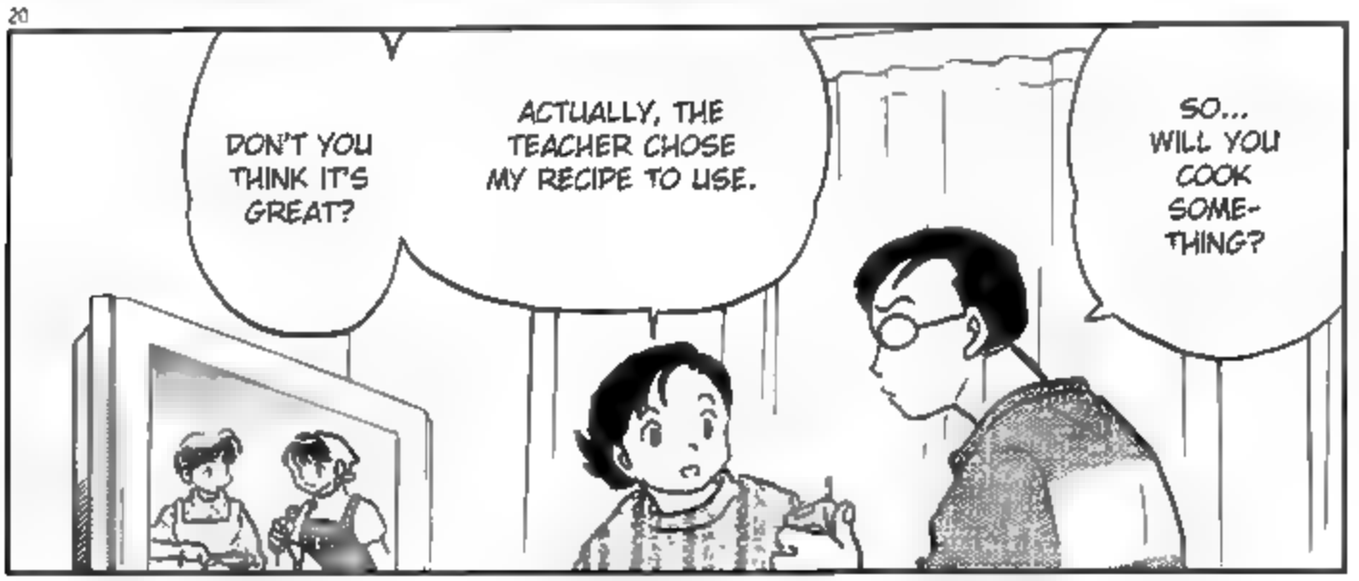
I MIGHT GET TO BE ON TV!
IT SEEMS ...
ANYWAYS ...

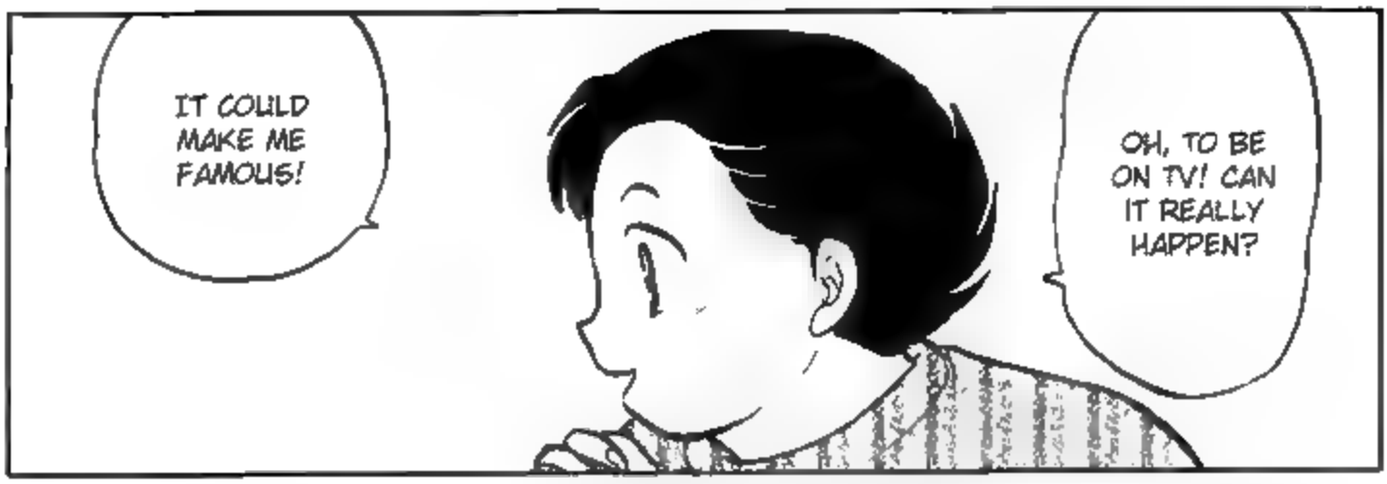

What's happening now!?
Huh !?

TODAY WE'RE VISITING A COOKING CLASS IN SETAGAYA.
APPLAUSE
IP IP IP
APPLAUSE
IP IP IP IP
IT'S THE RAKU RAKU COOKING ROADSHOW!

-they introduce regular housewives recipes.
I RECORDED THIS.
NEXT TIME, THEY'RE COMING TO OUR CLASS-ROOM.
HERE IT IS.
It seems that on this part of the snow,

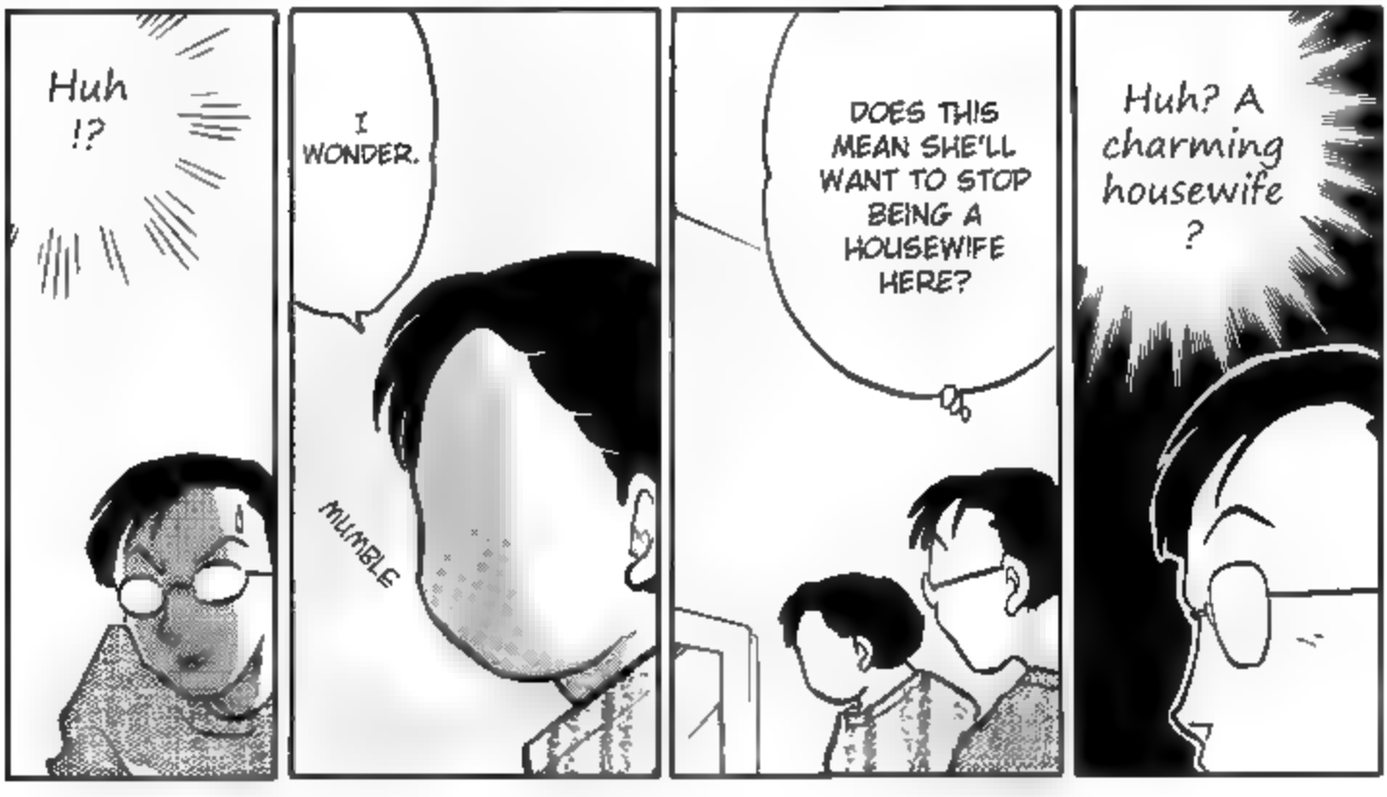
20


DON'T YOU THINK IT'S GREAT?
ACTUALLY, THE TEACHER CHOSE MY RECIPE TO USE.
SO... WILL YOU COOK SOME-THING?


IT COULD MAKE ME FAMOUS!
OH, TO BE ON TV! CAN IT REALLY HAPPEN?

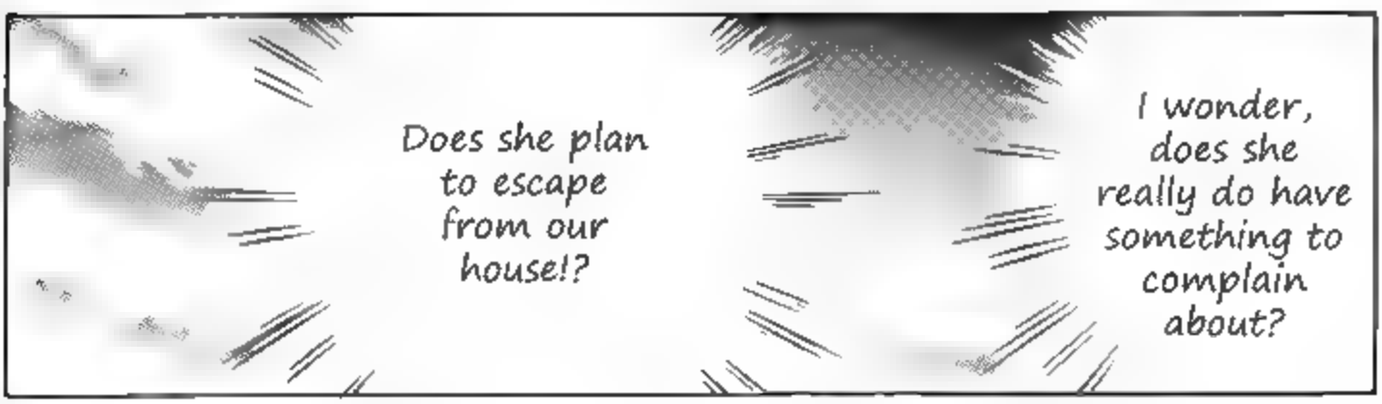
I don't want to say anything.
I COULD BECOME A CHARMING HOUSEWIFE TV PERSONALITY!

21

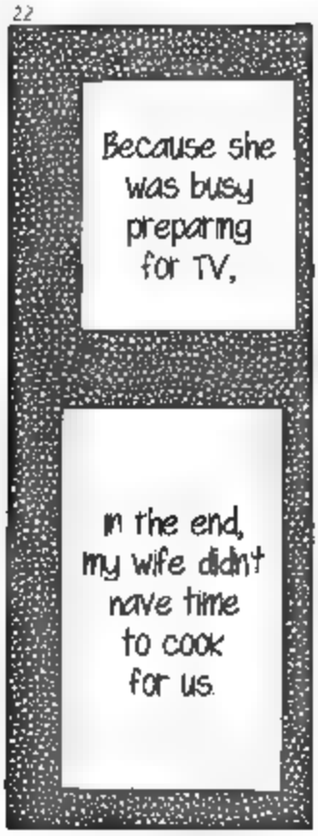

Huh !?
I WONDER.
MUMBLE
DOES THIS MEAN SHE'LL WANT TO STOP BEING A HOUSEWIFE HERE?
Huh? A charming housewife ?

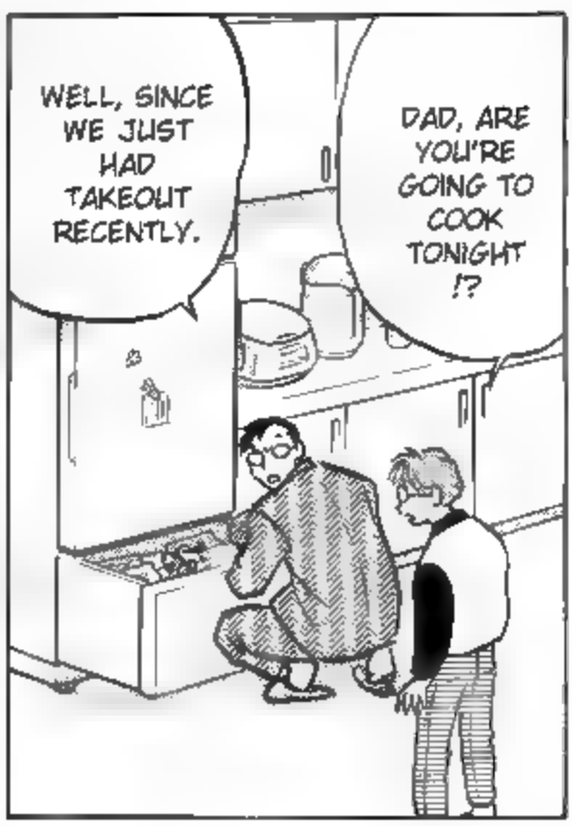
What's the meaning of this !?
Why did she say that !?

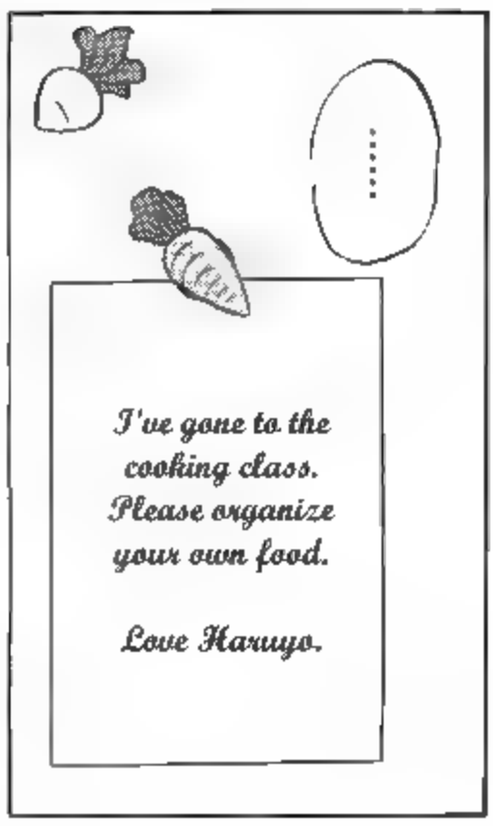
I'm scared to ask about it!
I'm scared!


Does she plan to escape from our house!?
I wonder, does she really do have something to complain about?

22

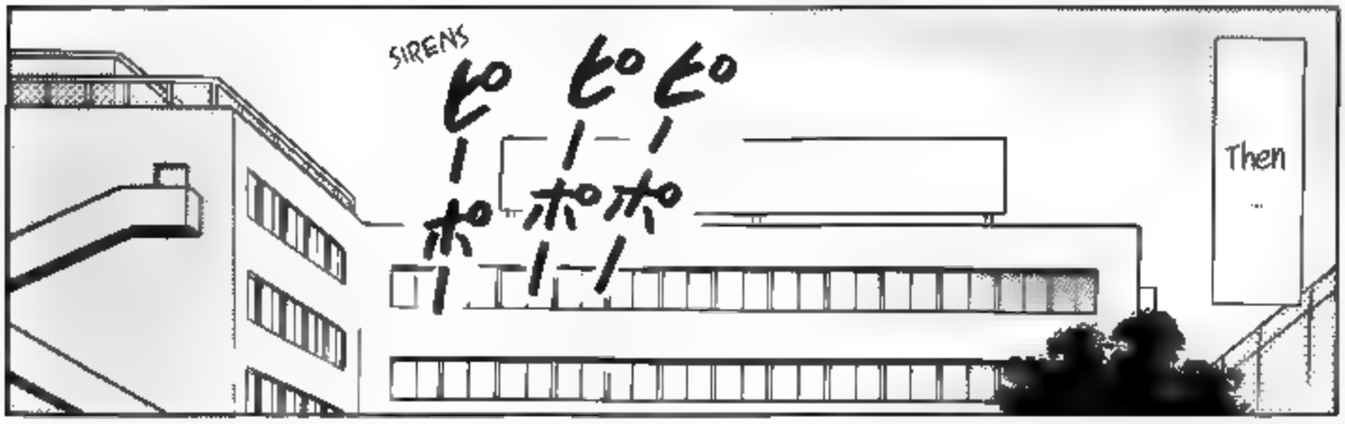

Because she was busy preparing for TV,
In the end, my wife didn't have time to cook for us.


WELL, SINCE WE JUST HAD TAKEOUT RECENTLY.
DAD, ARE YOU'RE GOING TO COOK TONIGHT !?


.....
I've gone to the cooking class. Please organize your own food.
Love Haruyo.

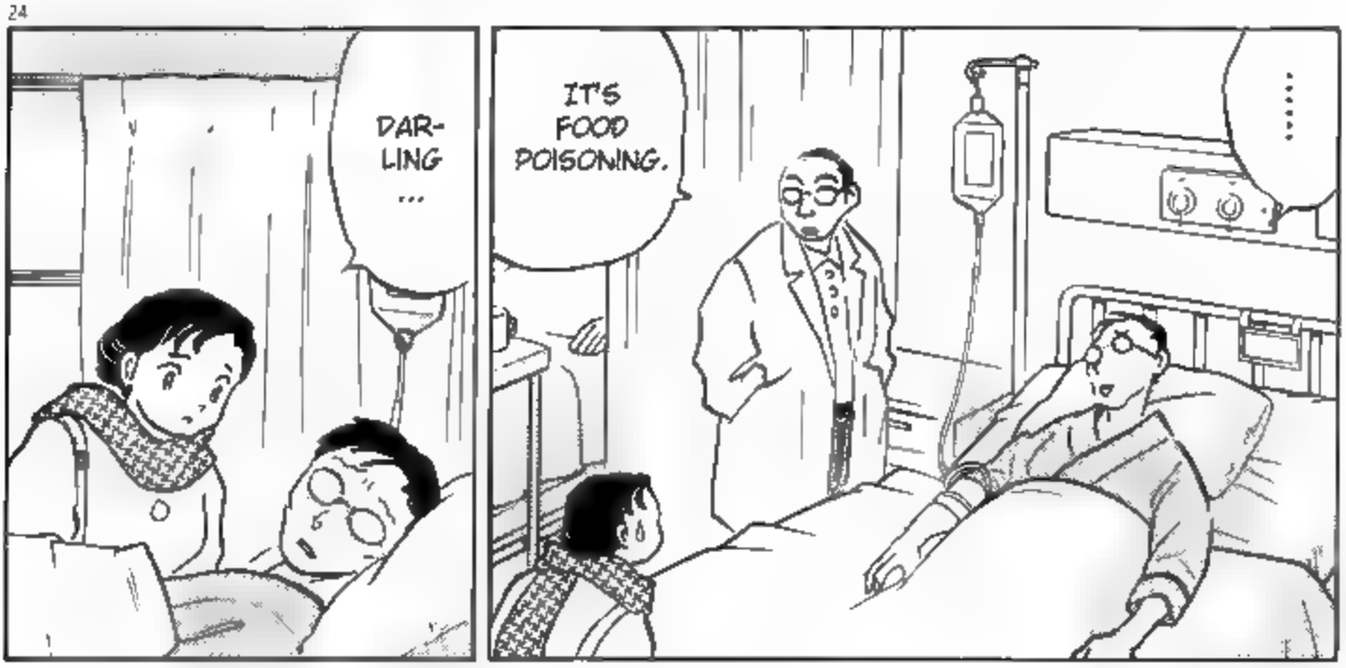
WHAT THE HELL DO YOU MEAN, "INEVITABLE DAY"?
ARE YOU DOING SOLO TRAINING FOR THAT INEVITABLE DAY?
SHI-NICHI ...
OK.
BEAN SPROUTS AND EGGS TOO...
OH, WE HAVE OYSTERS.
RAW OYSTERS
EVEN I CAN DO SOMETHING LIKE THIS.
THUD
どす
HOW'S THIS: DELUXE OYSTER RAMEN.
ぶくぶく
SPLLTTER
ずぞぞぞ…
SLURP SLURP
I'LL ENJOY MINE.
WELL IF IT'S SO BAD, THEN DON'T EAT IT!!
LET'S GET TAKEOUT.
THAT WAS AWFUL.

I'm going to confront my wife.
I'm not going to back down.
SLURP SLURP
ずっぱずっぱ
BUT JUST ONE MORE BITE ...
THIS TASTES TERR-IBLE.


SIRENS
ピーポーピーポー
Then ...

CLATTER
YOU COLLAPSED AT THE STATION ...
DAR-LING,

24

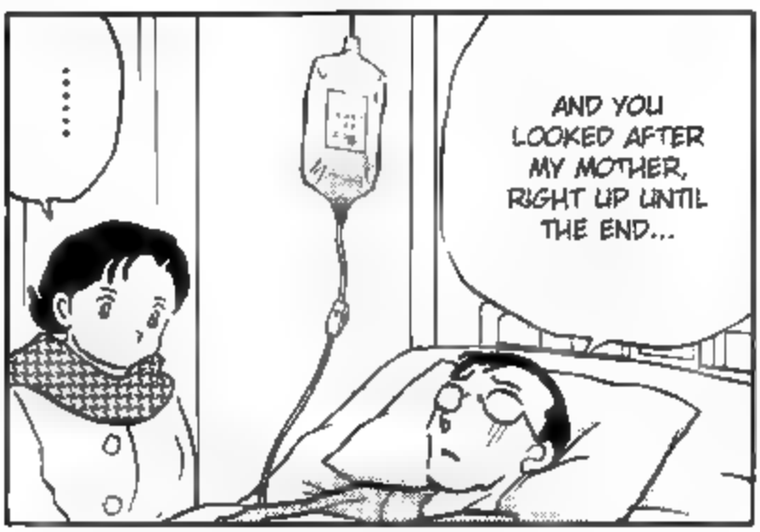

DAR-LING ...
IT'S FOOD POISONING.
.....

Haruyo...
IF ONLY I'D COOKED YOU SOMETHING PROPER TO EAT...
I'M SO SORRY...

UP UNTIL NOW, I'VE GOT SO MANY THINGS TO APOLOGIZE FOR...

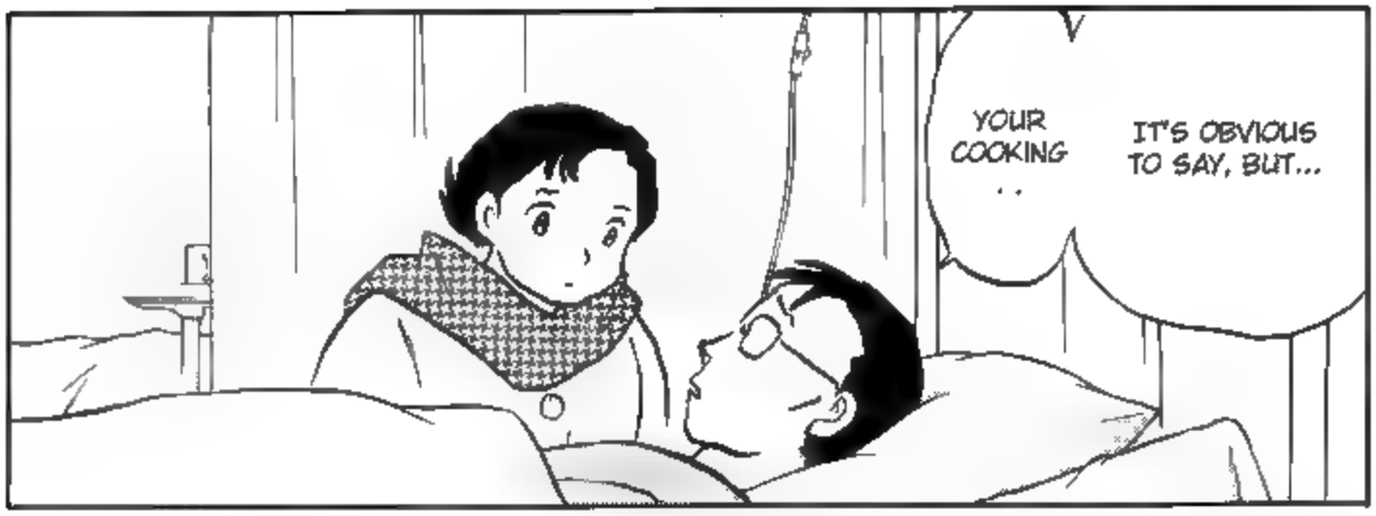
HM?
SAY... HARUYO ...

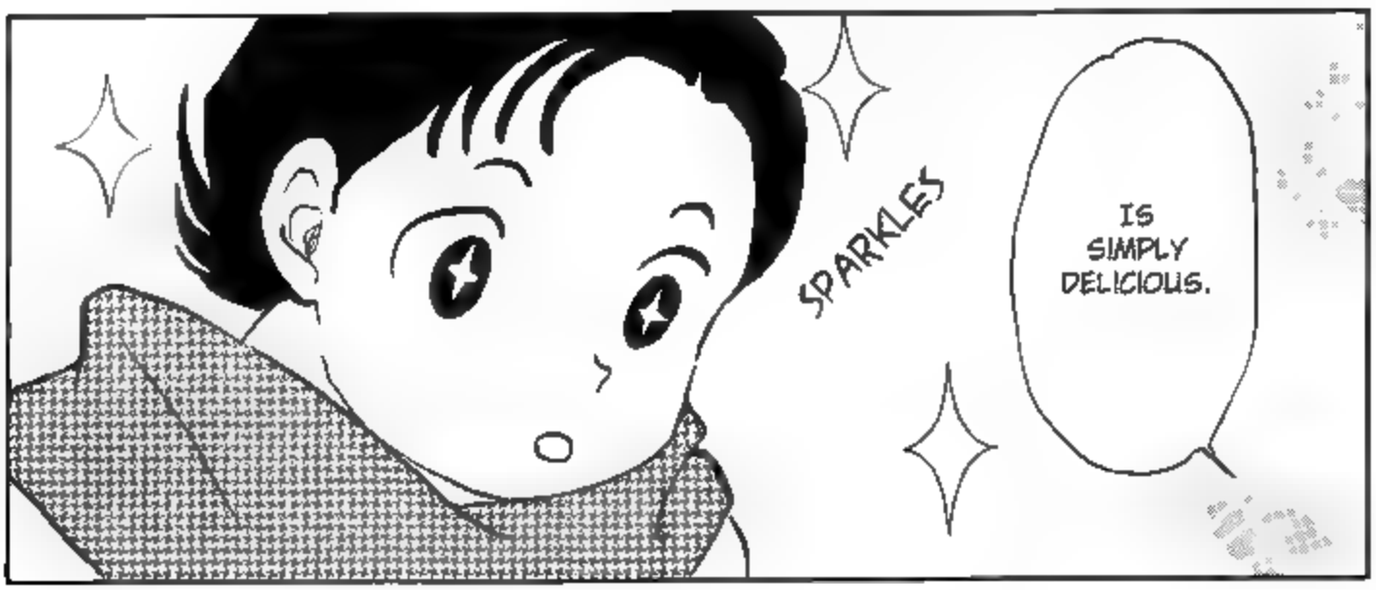
25


.....
AND YOU LOOKED AFTER MY MOTHER, RIGHT UP UNTIL THE END...

WHAT'S WRONG ?
LIKE WHAT?
LOTS OF STUFF.

ALSO, YOUR COOKING ...





I wish I'd told her sooner

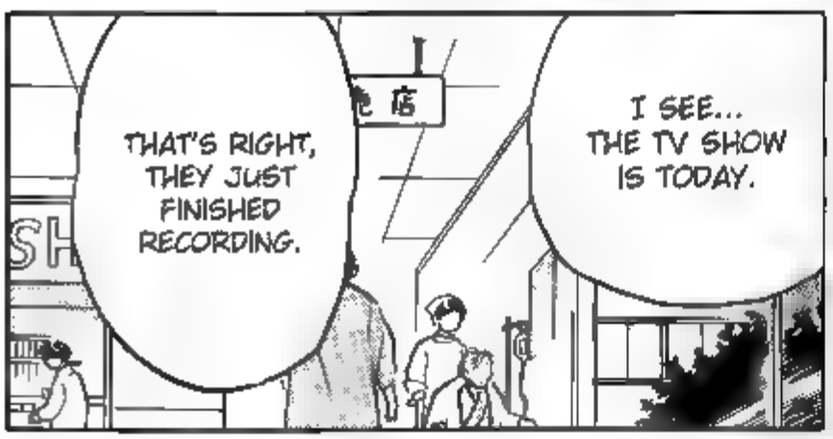
It was so easy to be honest

26

Huh
!?
I'VE GOT TO GO NOW.
SORRY,
SEE YOU LATER.
THE TV SHOW WILL START RECORDING SOON.
WHAAAT!?

GENERAL HOSPITAL

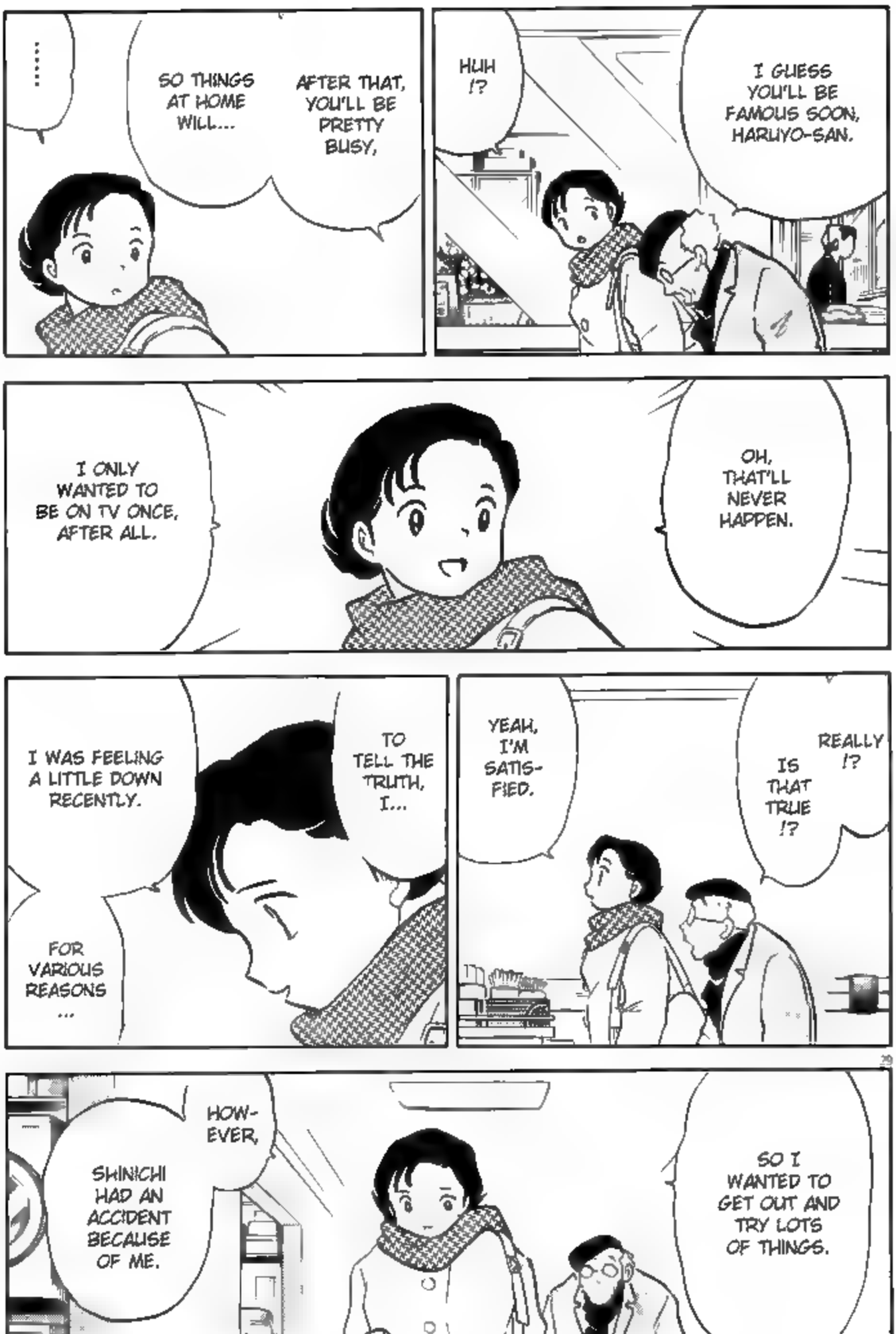
OH, FATHER-IN-LAW.
AH, HARUYO-SAN.
受付
神経科

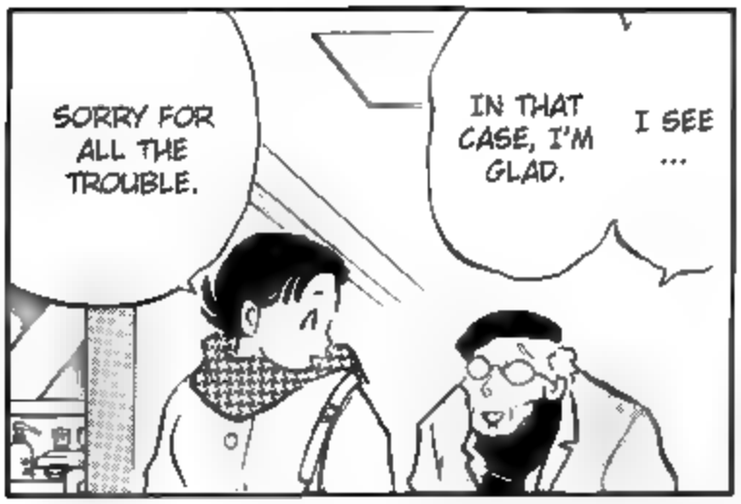

THAT'S RIGHT, THEY JUST FINISHED RECORDING.
I SEE... THE TV SHOW IS TODAY.

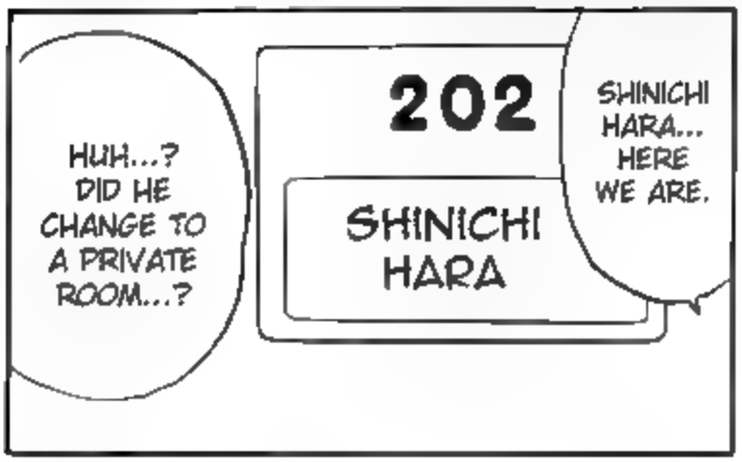
28

IS SOME-THING THE MATTER?
SIGH
検診

I knew it, it's no good.
ぱた…


.....
SO THINGS AT HOME WILL...
AFTER THAT, YOU'LL BE PRETTY BUSY,
HUH !?
I GUESS YOU'LL BE FAMOUS SOON, HARUYO-SAN.
I ONLY WANTED TO BE ON TV ONCE, AFTER ALL.
OH, THAT'LL NEVER HAPPEN.
I WAS FEELING A LITTLE DOWN RECENTLY.
FOR VARIOUS REASONS ...
TO TELL THE TRUTH, I...
YEAH, I'M SATIS-FIED.
IS THAT TRUE !?
REALLY !?
HOW-EVER,
SHINICHI HAD AN ACCIDENT BECAUSE OF ME.
SO I WANTED TO GET OUT AND TRY LOTS OF THINGS.


SORRY FOR ALL THE TROUBLE.
IN THAT CASE, I'M GLAD.
I SEE ...


HUH...? DID HE CHANGE TO A PRIVATE ROOM...?
202
SHINICHI HARA
SHINICHI HARA... HERE WE ARE.

カラカラカラ
CLATTER

THAT'S RIGHT ...
YES.
ARE YOU THE FAMILY OF SHINICHI HARA?

BESIDES, HE SAID MY COOKING WAS DELICIOUS.
SO I'M SATISFIED.
I WAS SO HAPPY TO HEAR THAT.

I'M AFRAID YOU DIDN'T ARRIVE IN TIME.
I'M SORRY TO SAY THIS.

No way.
What

51

I'M SORRY ... I'M SO SORRY.
DARLING ...
がくがく TREMBLE
SHI-SHINICHI ..

How can it be...
ドた FLOP

Another patient had the same name

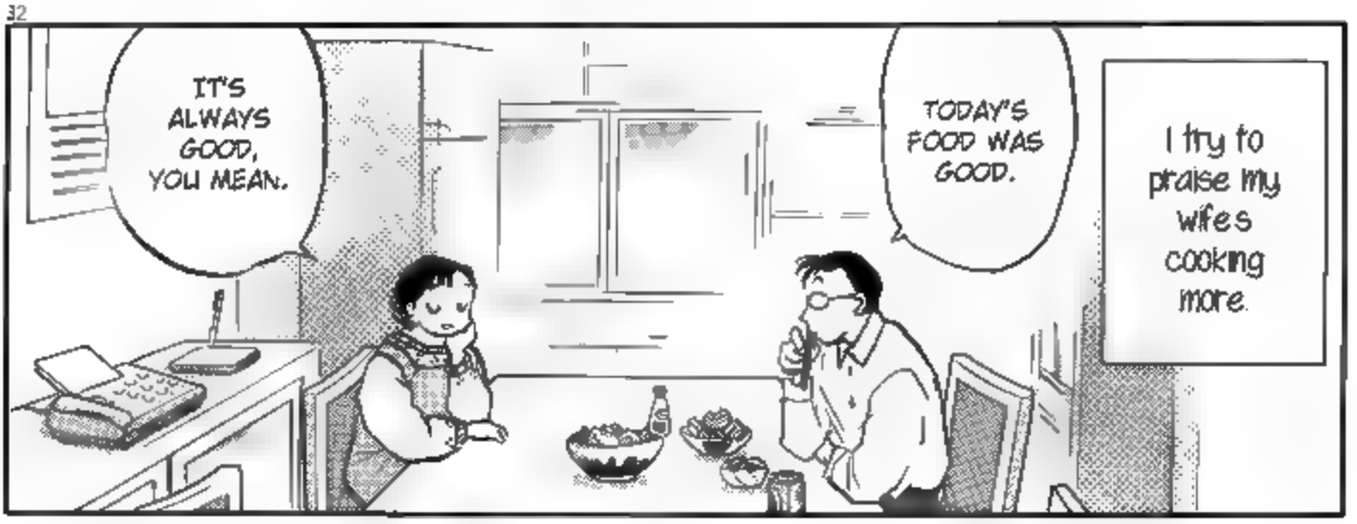
TOILET
HUH?
ゴボゴボゴボ TOILET FLUSHING
ジャ
ひょう SWINGS

WE LIKE TO USE SIMPLE RECIPES.
EXCITED
SINCE WE CAN'T COOK AT ALL,
WHAT'S THIS.
OH, AREN'T THEY THE YOUNG WIVES THAT CAME TO OUR HOUSE.

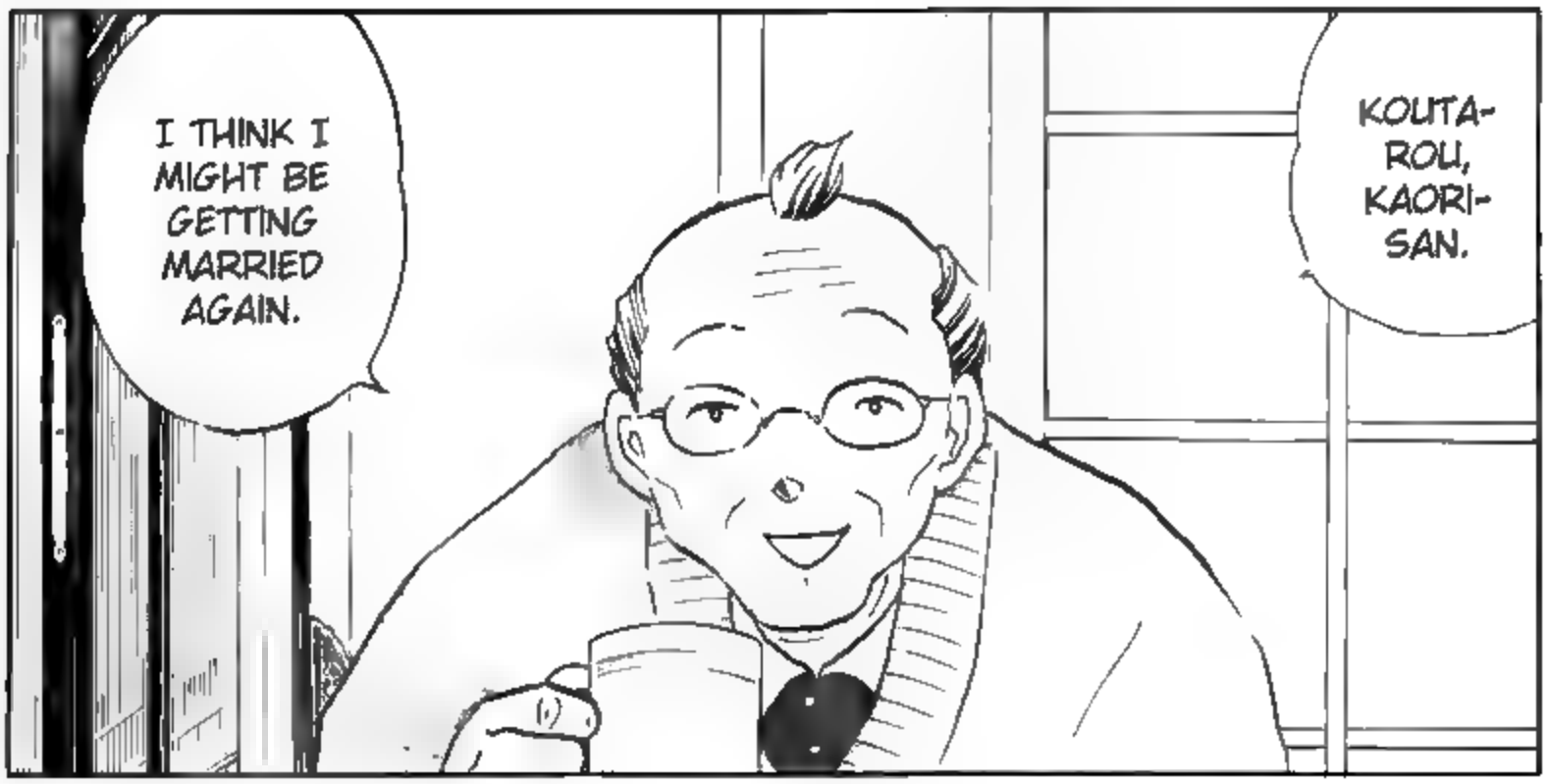
She also gave up on working in a deli

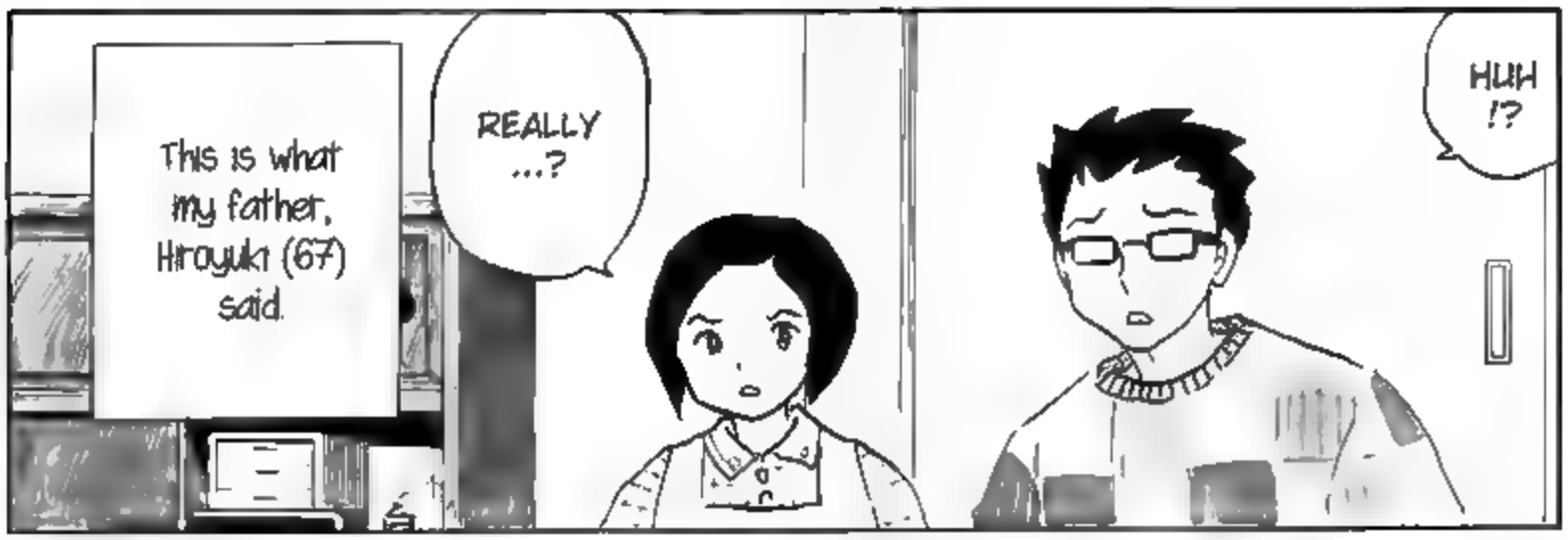
My wife stopped going to the cooking classes

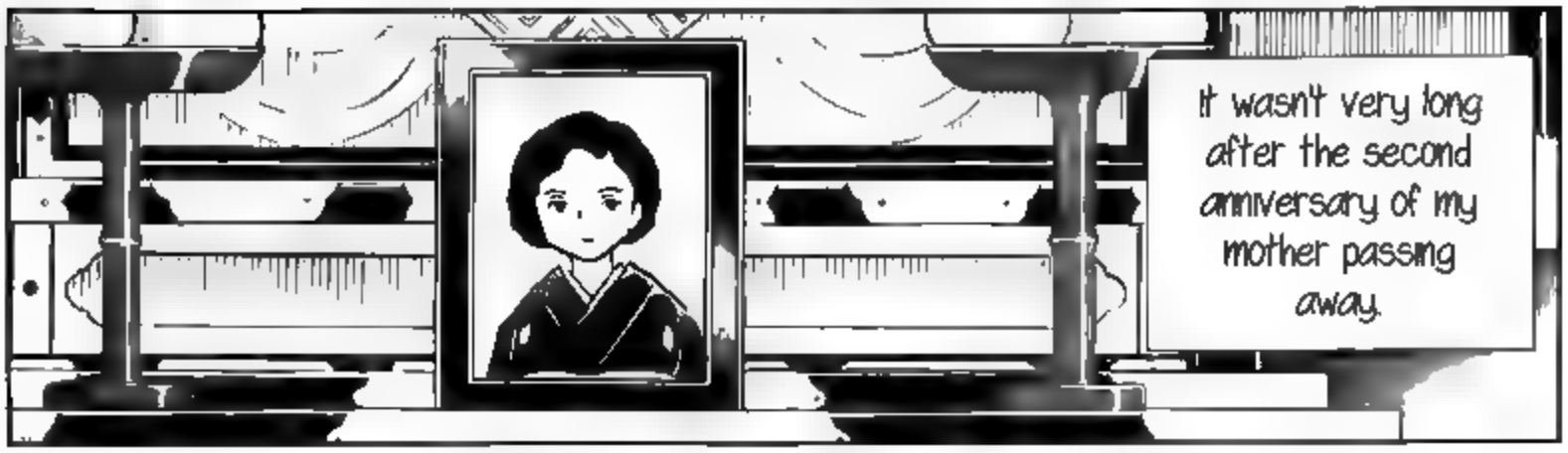
32



How Ridiculous At That Age


I THINK I MIGHT BE GETTING MARRIED AGAIN.
KOUTA-ROU, KAORI-SAN.


This is what my father, Hiroyuki (67) said.
REALLY ...?
HUH !?


It wasn't very long after the second anniversary of my mother passing away.

2

HAVE YOU BEEN SEEING SOMEONE ELSE!?
WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS, DAD?
I mean, it's only been two years since she's been gone...

OH, YOU'RE BACK!

clatter

SORRY TO BARGE IN!

HIROYUKI-SAN, HOW'S IT GOING?

I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU, WAKANA-CHAN!

WAKANA-CHAN AND I GO TO THE SAME SPORTS GYM.

HUH !?

UHHH ...

OH, YOU'RE HIS SON, KOUTAROU? NICE TO MEET YA!

AWKWARD PAUSE

FROM THERE WE GOT TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER.

WE JUST KINDA KEPT BUMPING INTO EACH OTHER.

4

Just hold on here...

SHE'S SEVEN YEARS YOUNGER THAN YOU, KOUTAROU.

I'M 28.

HOW OLD ARE YOU ?

UMM, I'M SORRY TO ASK WAKANA-SAN, BUT...

ACTUALLY, DIAMOND IS, LIKE, MY BIRTHSTONE.
ISN'T IT JUST ?
THAT'S SUCH A LOVELY RING ...
OH ...
500, 000 YEN!
OH, IT WAS ONLY 500,000 YEN.
A ha ha
Giggles
HIROYUKI-SAN BOUGHT IT FOR ME!
[TN. ALMOST $6000!]
Oh, you old fool, she's just using you!
What the hell...? This woman is..
They were one of those couples that mostly didn't talk to each other
I suppose you could say things had cooled between my parents.

She'd come out with things like that. But

After I got knocked up with you, I had to get married.

My mother would sometimes joke around.

sigh

My father seemed to be holding back his tears

Two years ago, right up to the day before, she was completely fine. But suddenly, she had a fit and collapsed.

Up until she passed away,

Actually she wasn't joking.

ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT MY FATHER AND MOTHER-IN-LAW ...?

HUH ...?

I KNOW, I WAS ALWAYS WONDERING WHEN THEY'D SPLIT UP.

SO THEY ACTUALLY STAYED TOGETHER RIGHT UP UNTIL THE END.

6

I SUPPOSE IT'S OKAY TO TELL YOU NOW.

FAMILY FROM THE MOTHER'S SIDE

DRUNK

AH, KAORI-SAN. SINCE YOU ONLY RECENTLY MARRIED INTO THIS FAMILY, I GUESS YOU DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO NOTICE.

EH !?

MY MOTHER-IN-LAW WAS ENGAGED TO ANOTHER MAN!?

THAT GUY RAN OFF WITH ANOTHER WOMAN.

SO, SHE BECAME DESPE-RATE.

IT SEEMS SHE ENDED UP GETTING DRUNK WITH HIROYUKI-SAN, WHO WAS HER CO-WORKER BACK THEN, AND THEY ENDED UP IN A HOTEL.

wants to die

ごーーん

はははははは

AND THAT'S HOW KOUTAROU-KUN WAS CONCEIVED!

DON'T TELL HIM THAT THOUGH.

Hahaha

It can't be.

I really didn't want to hear that

My late mother and my father never loved each other
SEE YA!
AFTER SHOPPING, LET'S GET SOME DELICIOUS FOOD!
But aside from that

Ever since that day, this Wakana girl

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ?
SHE'S DEFINITELY A GOLD DIGGER.

I'M HOME.
Rattling

OH, WELCOME HOME!
I WAS JUST USING YOUR BATH.
It seems like she's always at our home

OH, KOUTAROU, COME DRINK WITH US.

DAR-LING.

YOU NEED TO DO SOME-THING.

IS THAT GIRL STAYING HERE NOW !?

I'M JUST GONNA HAVE A BEER.

HUUUH !?

I have to say something clearly.

LEAVE THIS TO ME.

GOT IT.

I'M SCARED.

WHAT IS HER REAL INTENTION ?

HEY, YOU.

I'M GOING TO SAY THIS CLEARLY.

MY FATHER'S AN OLD MAN WHO LIVES ON A PENSION.

SHH.

HIROYUKI-SAN'S SLEEPING ...

おー

snore

I'M SAYING YOU CAN'T TAKE HIS PRECIOUS MONEY.

She said Koutarou-kun...

DON'T BE SILLY, KOUTAROU-KUN.

HIS MONEY !?

UMM,

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

T/N* THE "KUN" SUFFIX IS USUALLY USED FOR INTIMATE FRIENDS OR YOUNGER FAMILY MEMBERS!

WHY ?

THAT'S HONESTLY ALL IT IS.

I JUST WANT TO BE WITH HIROYUKI-SAN.

Face Reddening

I STARTED TO FEEL SORRY FOR HIM.

RECE-NTLY,

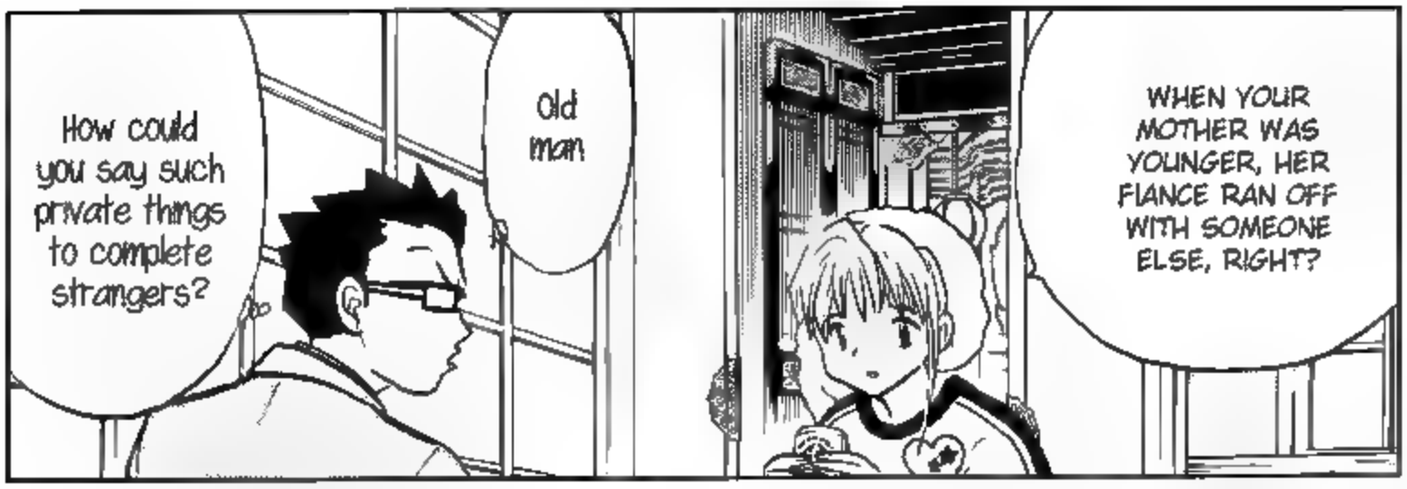
Huh !?

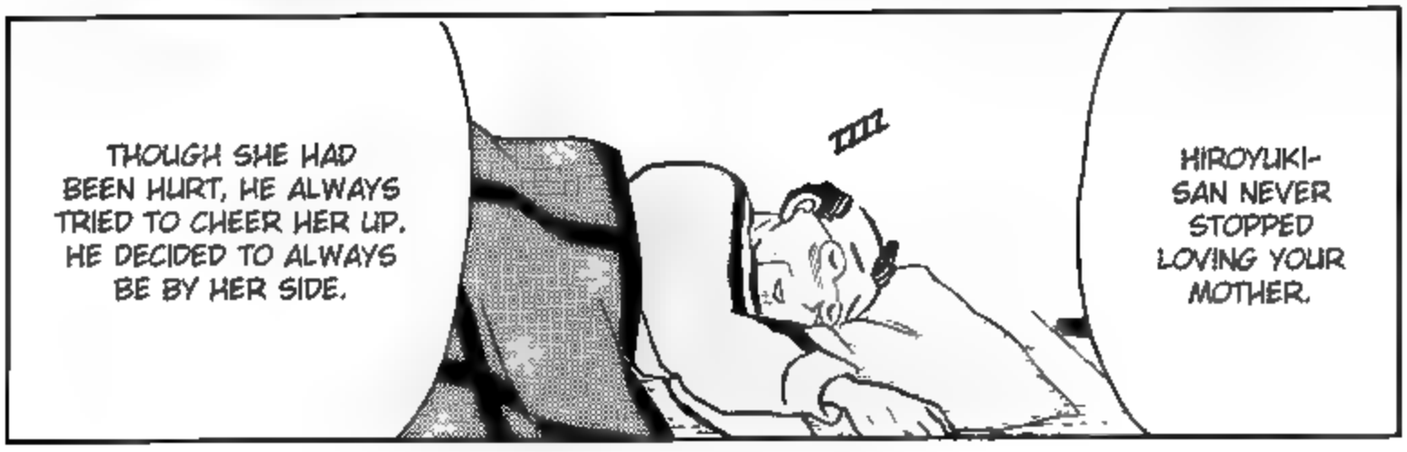
...IS HE LOVED HER SO MUCH.

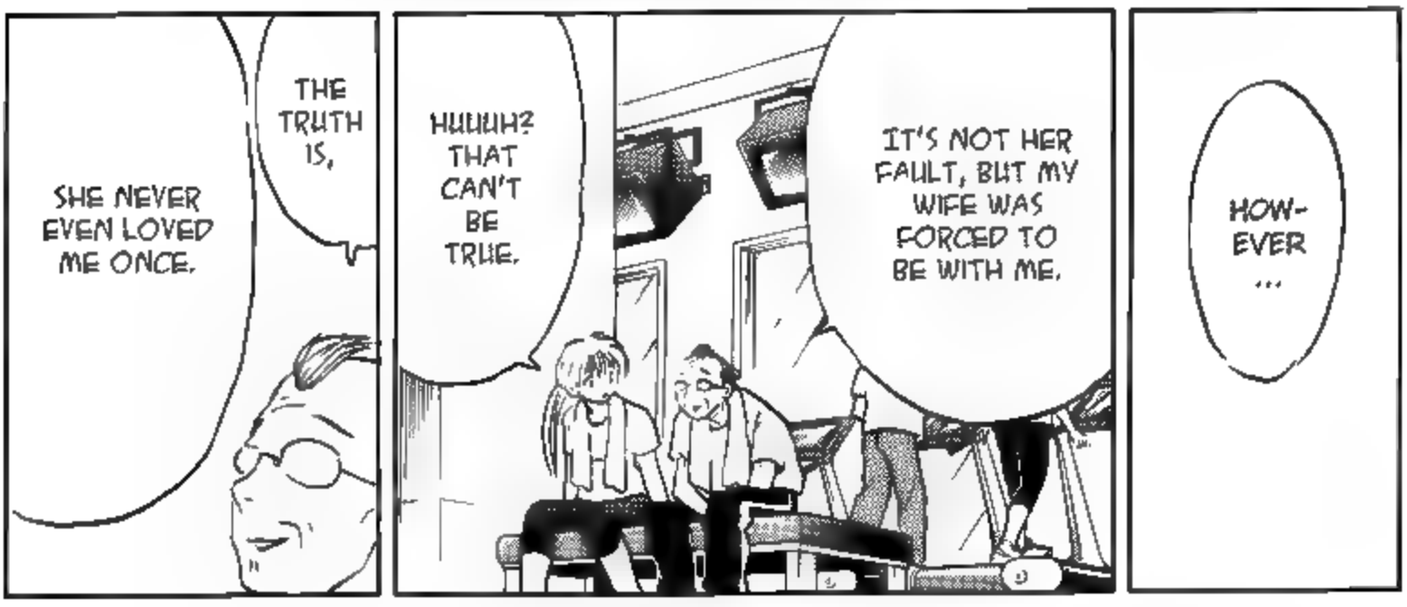
WELL, I MEAN YOUR MOTHER,

THE THING ABOUT HIROYUKI-SAN AND HIS DECEASED WIFE...

WHAT ?


How could you say such private things to complete strangers?
Old man
WHEN YOUR MOTHER WAS YOUNGER, HER FIANCE RAN OFF WITH SOMEONE ELSE, RIGHT?


THOUGH SHE HAD BEEN HURT, HE ALWAYS TRIED TO CHEER HER UP. HE DECIDED TO ALWAYS BE BY HER SIDE.
ZZZZ
HIROYUKI-SAN NEVER STOPPED LOVING YOUR MOTHER.


SHE NEVER EVEN LOVED ME ONCE.
THE TRUTH IS,
HUUUH? THAT CAN'T BE TRUE.
IT'S NOT HER FAULT, BUT MY WIFE WAS FORCED TO BE WITH ME.
HOW-EVER ...

After I got knocked up with you, I had to get married.
Oh.

But, I wouldn't even want one now anyway.

Now that I think about it, I didn't even get a ring.

I couldn't even have a wedding ceremony because you were in my belly.

Poor dad.

My mother did let that much slip.

Well, it's true.

WITH ME?

EEEEH ? REALLY ?

IT SEEMS MY FATHER IS THINKING OF HAVING A SECOND MARRIAGE WITH YOU.

HUH ?

I WANT A SERIOUS ANSWER HERE.

OK.

YOU'RE SO CUTE, HIROYUKI-SAN.

I JUST WANT TO BE WITH HIM, AS A FRIEND.

BUT HIROYUKI-SAN AND I DON'T HAVE THAT KIND OF RELATIONSHIP.

Thank goodness!

So it's just Dad's fantasy.

Oh

THAT'S... OH MY.

OF COURSE.

I see

REALLY ?

OH.

MAYBE IT'D BE BEST IF I KEPT QUIET ABOUT NOT WANTING TO GET MARRIED.

I NEED TO BE CAREFUL WITH HIROYUKI-SAN'S FEELINGS.

AH, BUT ...

14

WAKANA-SAN ...

I think she actually might be a really nice girl.

I think Dad's just having a bit of a fantasy.

YEAH, THAT WAKANA GIRL,

YOU MEAN IT'S NOT A MARRIAGE SCAM?

WHAT ?

How-ever

OH, IT SUITS YOU, WAKANA-CHAN.

I FEEL BAD, YOU ALREADY BOUGHT ME THIS COAT.

MOGU

My father became Wakana's sugar daddy.

THANKS, HIROYUKI-SAN.

WHOOOAH! A DESIGNER HERMES KELLY BAG!

T/N* WORTH $10,000-$12,000!

I JUST WANT TO SEE HER HAPPY FACE.

YOU'RE USING YOUR SAVINGS ...?

AH, IT'S FINE. I HAVE PLENTY OF MONEY SAVED UP.

Strides

Strides

HEY, DAD, THAT'S ENOUGH ...

I MADE RESERVATIONS AT A FRENCH RESTAURANT.

see you

WE'RE GOING TO CELEBRATE HER BIRTHDAY TODAY.

THAT GIRL SAID THAT DIAMOND WAS HER BIRTH STONE, DIDN'T SHE? SHE WAS LYING HER ASS OFF.

... SO ?

... FEBRUARY'S BIRTH STONE IS AMETHYST.

Slides

clattering

OH, MY NEIGHBOR FROM ACROSS THE ROAD.

WAIT, HOLD UP!

More lies followed from Wakana.

DO YOU KNOW THIS WOMAN?

WELL, THIS SERIOUS-LOOKING GUY WAS THERE. A DETECTIVE, MAYBE...?

MY FATHER-IN-LAW GOES TO THAT GYM.

OH ...

I'M JUST GOING HOME FROM THE SPORTS GYM.

FOLL-OWING ... AROUND ?

HUH ...

IT WAS THAT GIRL WHO HAS BEEN FOLLOWING AROUND YOUR FATHER-IN-LAW.

ACTU-ALLY,

OH, FANCY MEETING YOU HERE.

HELLO.

SHE HANGS AROUND FOR HIM TO COME, THEN GETS COSY WITH HIM.

SHE'S FAMOUS FOR IT AT THE GYM.

HEY, DARLING.

MAYBE YOU SHOULD CONTACT THE POLICE.

Definitely so

IN OTHER WORDS,

SHE'S TARGETING MY OLD MAN?

山商会

MAYBE THAT'S A BIT TOO MUCH.

But some kind of detective was looking for her for all we know.

She might be a criminal ...

But, is he really being taken advantage of because he's lonely...?

Or, rather than mourning my mother,

18

...maybe he's trying to insult her!

CRIM-INAL ...

YOU DON'T SAY!

Please, come home quickly!

I'm already scared

trump trump

I was still in junior high school. It was my mother's birthday.

I'M HOOOME.

Only once did I ever see my father give my mother a present.

So formal.

She silently received them.

My father came home drunk and silently gave her some roses.

My mother wasn't someone who could be joyful or femmine.

STOP YOUR FATHER !!

Running

どたたたた

DARLING, QUICKLY.

I'M HOME.

Rattle

ガラララ

HEY.

LET'S SEE, WHERE'S MY NAME STAMP ...

OH, PLEASED TO MEET YOU.

An insurance agent ?

WHAT ...?

HE'S GOING TO MAKE WAKANA THE BENEFACTOR OF HIS LIFE INSURANCE ...

THERE'S NO WAY THAT GIRL WANTS TO MARRY YOU!

COULD YOU BE ANY MORE STUPID !?

This stinks of crime!

SO, IS IT OK IF THE RECIPIENT ISN'T A FAMILY MEMBER ?

OH, IT'S FINE.

UMM ...

.....

IS ANYBODY HOME ?
HELLO ?
ding dong ding dong
He..
stamped it!
OK.
Press
holds up
I HEARD THAT THIS WOMAN HAS BEEN COMING TO YOUR HOUSE.
Stomp Stomp
OH, WHO COULD IT BE AT SUCH A TIME ...
It's the detective-type guy!

HIROYUKI-SAN, I CAME TO SEE YOU!

THE ONSEN IS...

HOLD IT.

だっ dash

OPEN YOUR EYES.

DAD,

HEY, WASN'T THAT WAKANA-CHAN'S VOICE?

ZOOOOM

ぴゅ

STOP !!

WON'T BE COMING BACK.

THAT GIRL

AND I WAS THINKING OF GIVING YOU THIS HOUSE TOO.

OH.

SO YOU'VE LEFT ME, WAKANA-CHAN.

UMM, SO THE INSURANCE BENEFACTOR IS...

Hesitantly

JUST CANCEL IT.

NOT REALLY.

I'M JUST PULLING YOUR LEG.

Huh

I'M GOING TO THOROUGHLY CHECK JUST TO BE SURE!

YOU'RE THE WORST.

IT WAS ONLY A JOKE.

TELL ME YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED THE NAME ON THE HOUSE DEEDS!

Rustle

CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION OF REAL PROPERTY

OFFICIAL DIVORCE REGISTRATION PAPERS

Kamo Hiroyuki

Divorce papers!?

He didn't stamp it?

But my father's seal..

What's this?

My mother's seal is stamped on here.

DAD, WHAT'S THIS ...?

It's up to you to decide.

Thank you for staying beside me.

She said this after Koutarou left on his honeymoon.

left in this house

it became just the two of us,

That's why...

Koutarou and his wife were thinking of renting their own apartment

It's up to you to decide.

25

WAKANA-CHAN !?

Hiroyuki-san!? It's me

ring ring

front door closing "ガチャン"

HUH ?

THERE'S ALSO AN APPLICATION FORM ...

THIS ISN'T JUST A DIVORCE CERTIFICATE.

HIS BAGS ...

OH, HIS BAGS ARE GONE.

WHAT !?

I'm going out for a while.

~Dad

DAD ?

ALL THAT STUFF ABOUT A LIFE INSURANCE BENEFACTOR ...

HEY ...

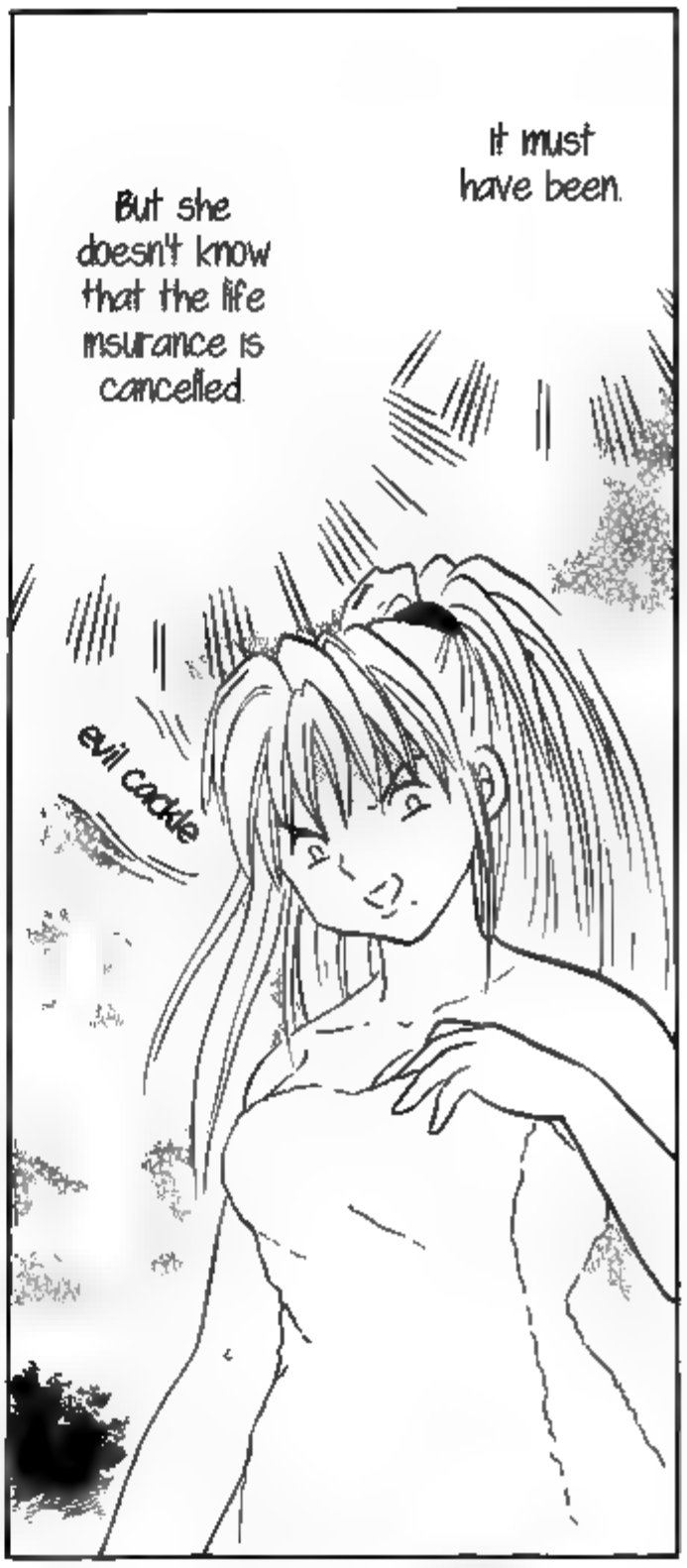
COULD SHE HAVE ASKED HIM TO DO IT?

An onsen !?

I HELPED HIM PACK HIS BAGS.

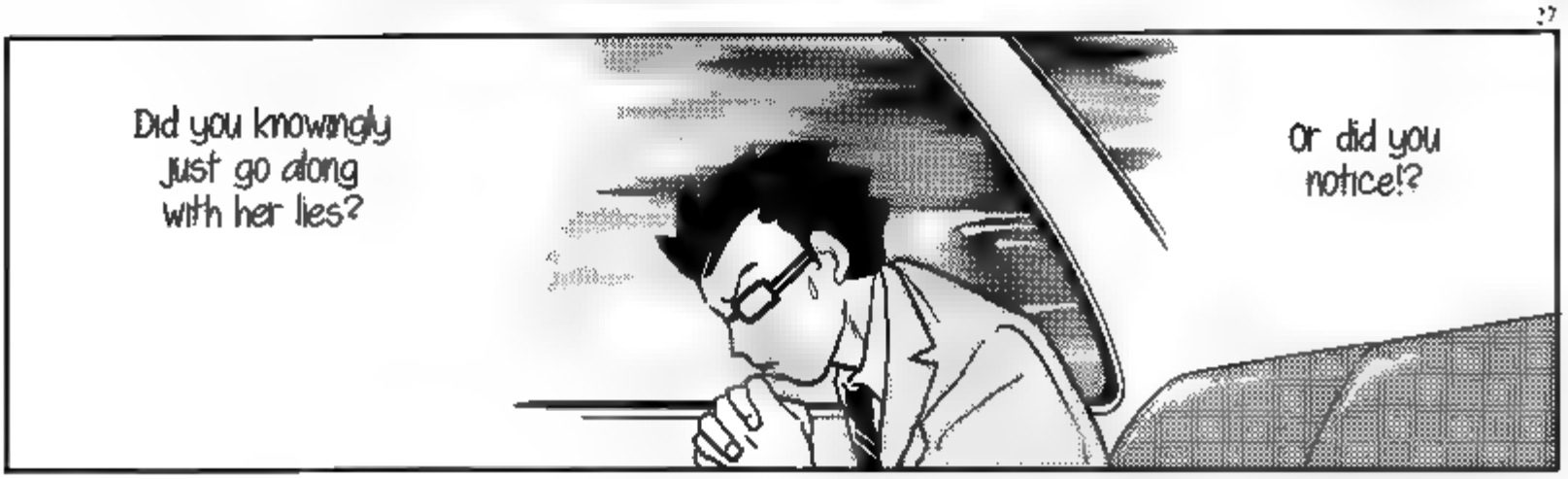
YOU KNOW, YOUR FATHER PLANNED TO GO TO AN ONSEN WITH THAT WAKANA GIRL.

Watch out, dad!
A life insurance murder!
MAN (67) DROWNS AT ONSEN


It must have been.
But she doesn't know that the life insurance is cancelled.
evil cackle

TAXI !!!
GO TO TOKYO STATION.

Didn't you notice you were being deceived!?
What the hell, old man.


Did you knowingly just go along with her lies?
Or did you notice!?

Are you really so lonely!?

Please watch over dad for me.

I'm begging you, mother

!

Appears

sprints

DAD !!!

BANK

ATM

STOP THE CAR!

Brakes

28

!

OH, KOUTAROU ...

Sprinting

It's the detective-type guy!

thud

thud thud

suddenly

I'M BEGGING YOU, PLEASE COME HOME !!

EH !?

WAKA-NAAAA!

THIS IS TOO MUCH!

29

This girl...

BUT, IT MADE HIM HAPPY, GIVING THEM TO ME.

HOW COULD YOU, TAKING DIAMONDS AND FUR COATS FROM OLD PEOPLE...

The man was Wakana's husband.

FAREWELL, HIROYUKI-SAN!

I'M REALLY SORRY ABOUT THIS.

I REALLY ENJOYED MYSELF, AFTER ALL.

AH, IT'S FINE.

I WASN'T TRYING TO FOOL YOU.

SORRY, HIROYUKI-SAN.

PHEW.

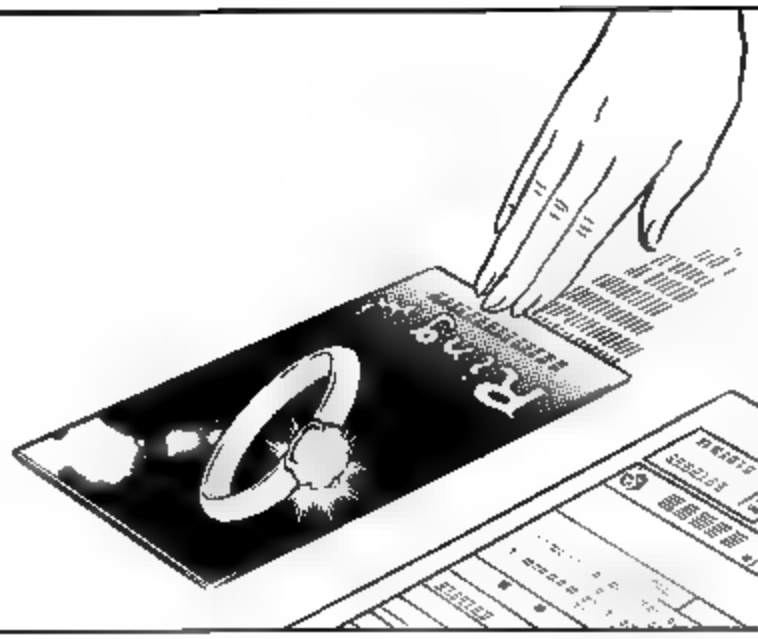
It's up to you to decide.

WHAT ...?

YOU KNOW, I ACTUALLY BOUGHT IT FOR YOUR MOTHER.

THAT DIAMOND RING ...

she pulled out divorce papers and a diamond ring catalog.



At that time,

Despite this

So I bought the ring.

But even so, I didn't feel like breaking up with her

Demanding this after being together for so long made me angry. It felt like she was testing me

OH, YOU REALLY HAD US WORRIED, YOU KNOW.

But

SO I WAS LEFT IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE.

Sigh

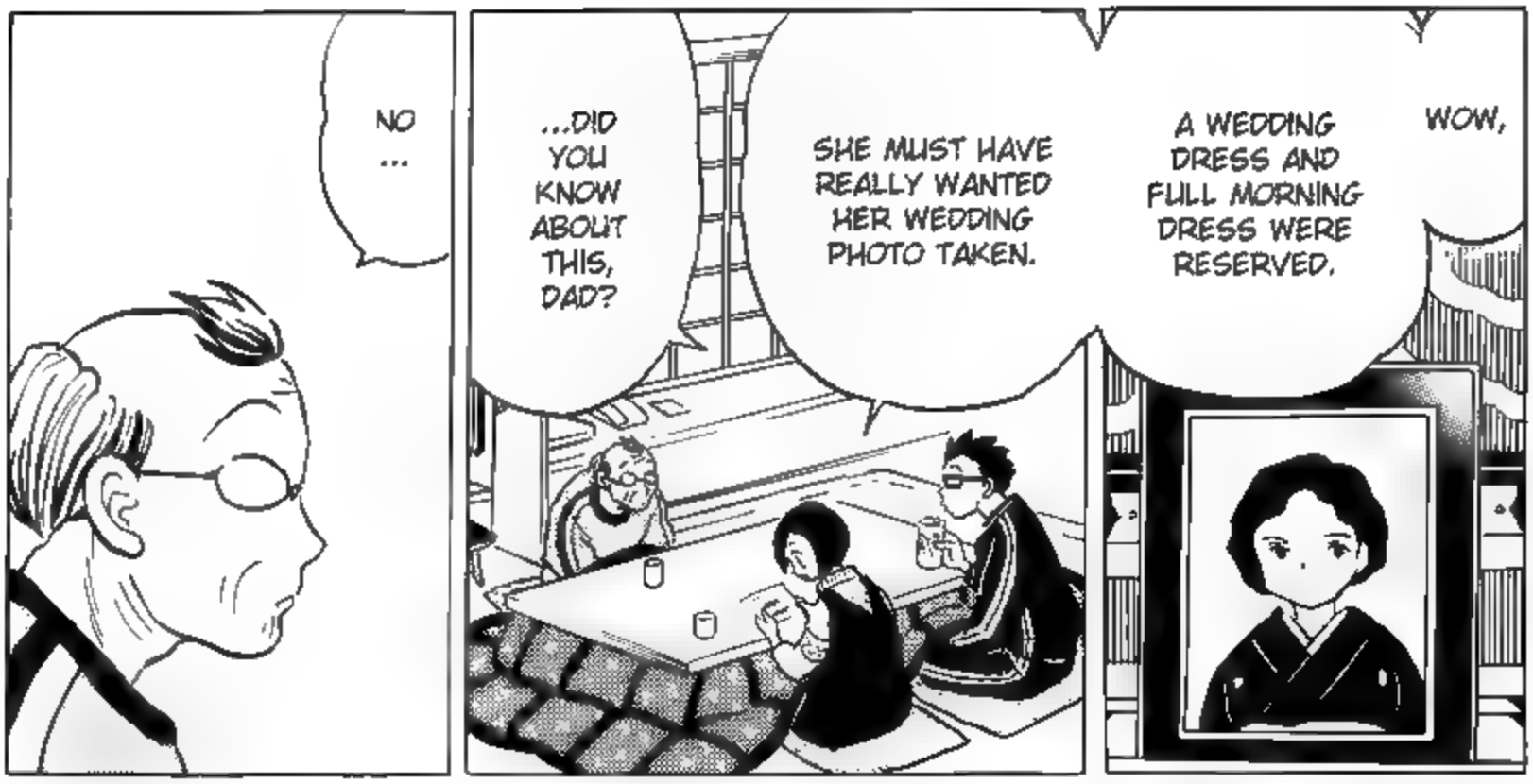
Before I could give her the ring...

31

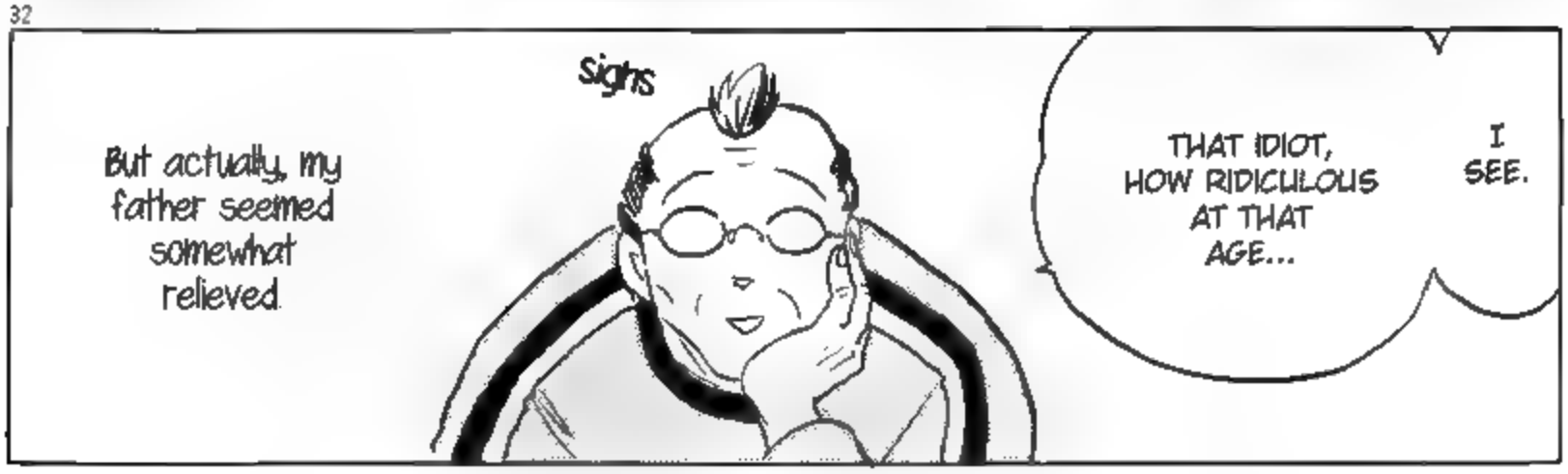
were her signed applications for dress rental and a photo studio session.

MORI PHOTO STUDIO
RESERVATION APPLICATION FORM
4月10日 AM PM 11時

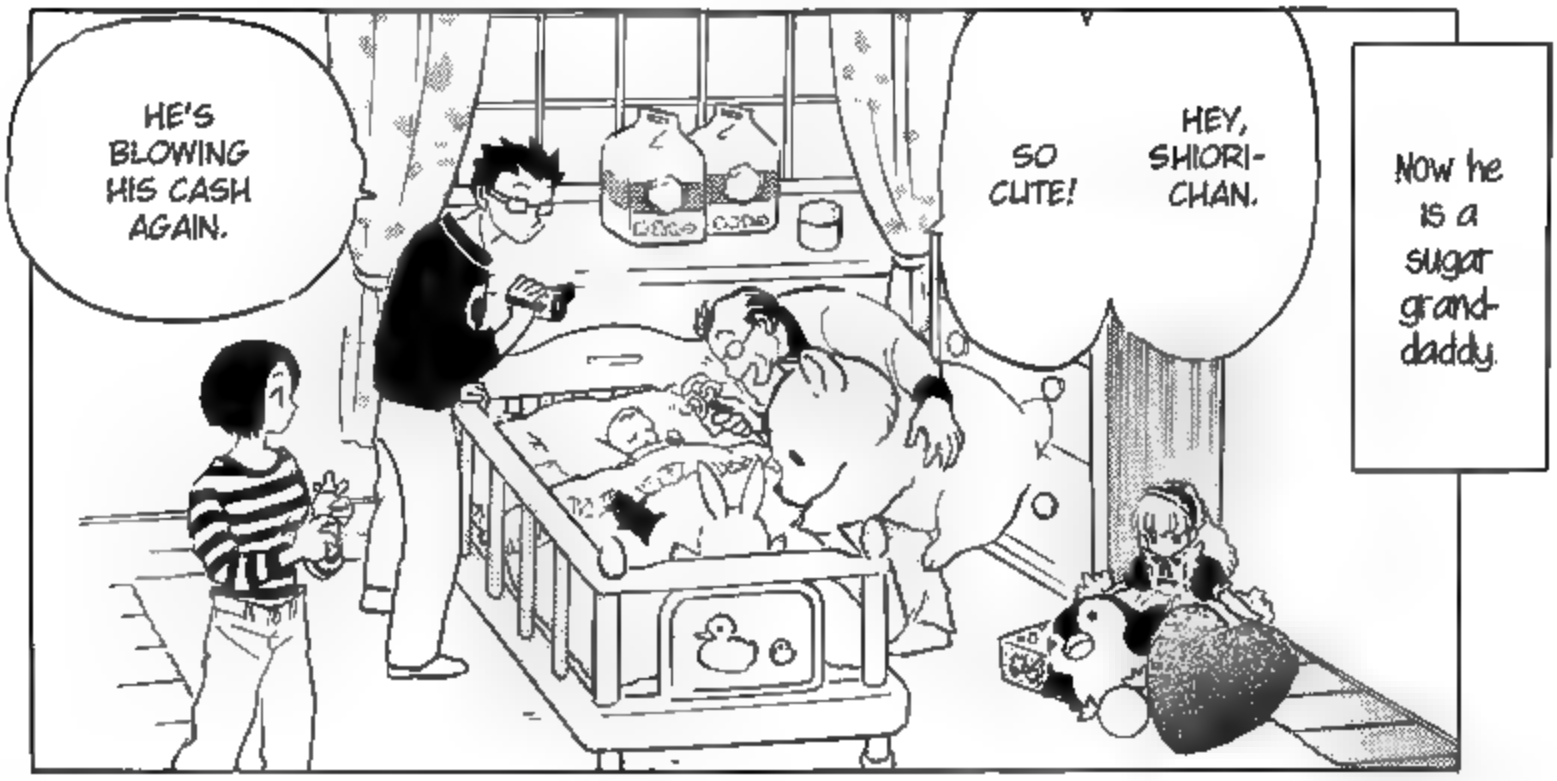
We found the divorce papers in a box But under them,


NO ...
...DID YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS, DAD?
SHE MUST HAVE REALLY WANTED HER WEDDING PHOTO TAKEN.
A WEDDING DRESS AND FULL MORNING DRESS WERE RESERVED.
WOW,

32



Eventually...



UNMEI NO TORI

I CALL THEM "BIRDS OF FATE".

LIGHT MEALS TEAHOUSE THE BIRD'S NEST

LIGHT MEALS TEAHOUSE THE BIRD'S NEST

"KARAN"

I'M GONNA WIN TODAY.

"KARAN"

MAS-TER,

2 [TN: MASTER = TITLE OF BAR MANAGER/PROPRIETER]

"KARAN" "KARAN"

AH, WELCOME.

WELCOME BACK, TSUKANAI-SAN.

AH ...

IN THE LEAD IS THE POPULAR FAVORITE, (1) BIRD BARRY, IN CLOSE SECOND IS..

TOSHIDA

AND THE HORSES ARE OFF!

ごくり

"HORSES SPRINTING"

COME ON!

YES!

THAT'S IT, JUST LIKE THAT!

YES, (1) AND (3); (1) AND (3)!

"CAW CAW"

"CAW CAW"

"CAW CAW"

TSUKANAI-SAN IS GOING TO LOSE AGAIN.

OH MY,

THE FIRST TIME I SAW BIRDS OF FATE WAS AT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.

OK, THIS WAY.

IT WAS ON A SCHOOL FIELD TRIP.

DAMMIT !!!

...THE COMBINATION FOR AN EXACTA IS (2)-(4)...

AND NOW FOR THE RACE RESULTS

THIS WAY.

"PLUMP"

ぽ・てり

A BIRD ...

OH,

EVERYONE FOLLOW ME!

4

I WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD SEE THE BIRD.

"STRIDE"

すたすた

"STRIDE"

"DOKI DOKI"

どきどき

OR ANYONE ELSE ...

I GUESS SENSEI HASN'T NOTICED IT YET.

IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT THE TEACHER RECEIVED A GOOD SCOLDING FROM EVERYONE

HUH ...?

AND SO WE ALL ENDED UP LOST.

IN DEBT SMEARED LOCAL COLLEGE STUDENTS.

DIDN'T I SAY TO CUT IT OUT?

WITH THE CLASS CLOWN

SINCE THEN, I KEPT SEEING THE BIRDS.

AND AS A RESULT, UNFORTUNATE THINGS WOULD HAPPEN TO THEM.

THAT SOMEHOW THE BIRDS ONLY APPEARED OVER THE HEADS OF PEOPLE WHO DESERVED MISFORTUNE.

I GRADUALLY CAME TO UNDERSTAND

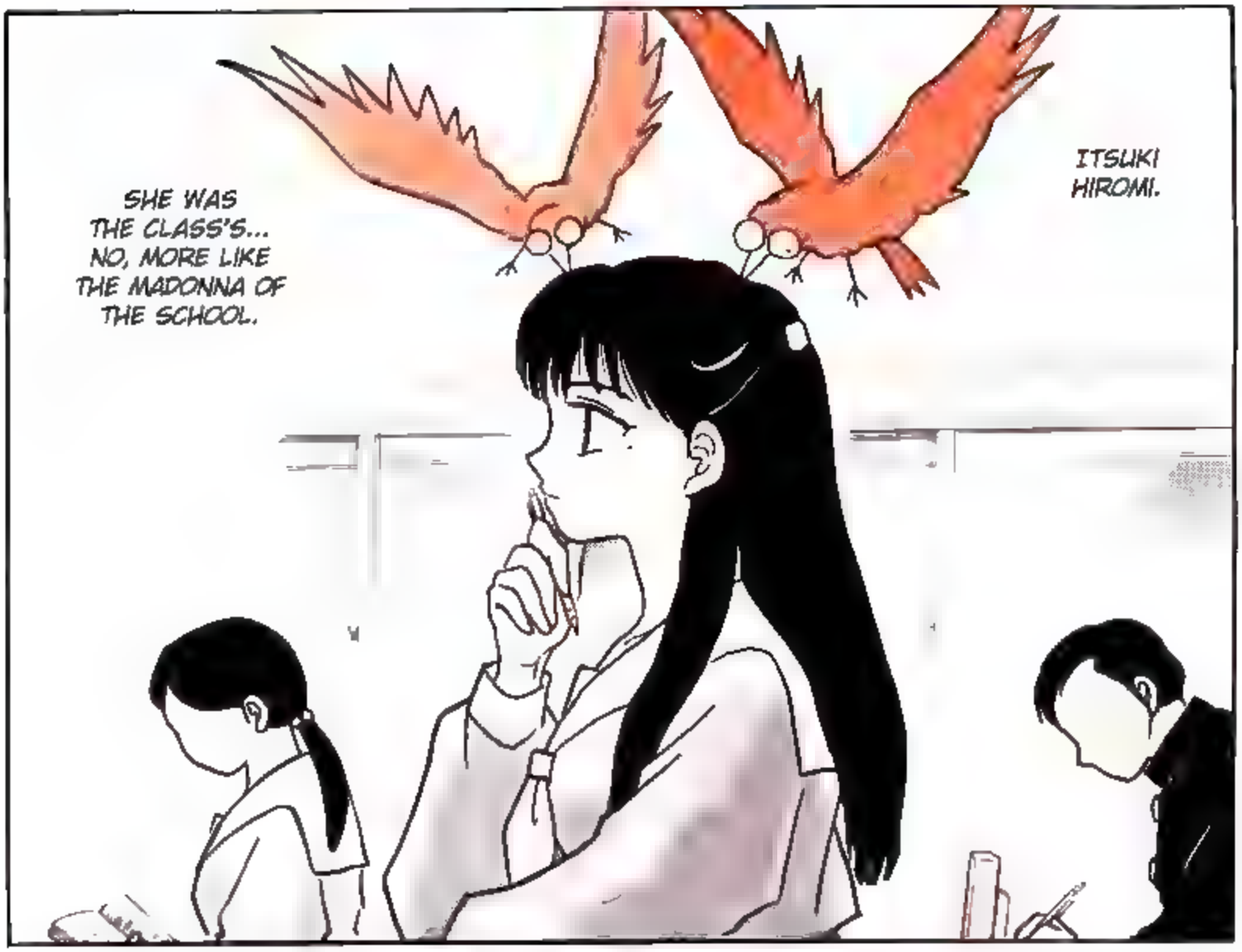
AT LEAST UNTIL MY 2ND YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL.

BEING ABLE TO SEE THE BIRDS DIDN'T CAUSE ME ANY PROBLEMS IN LIFE THOUGH.

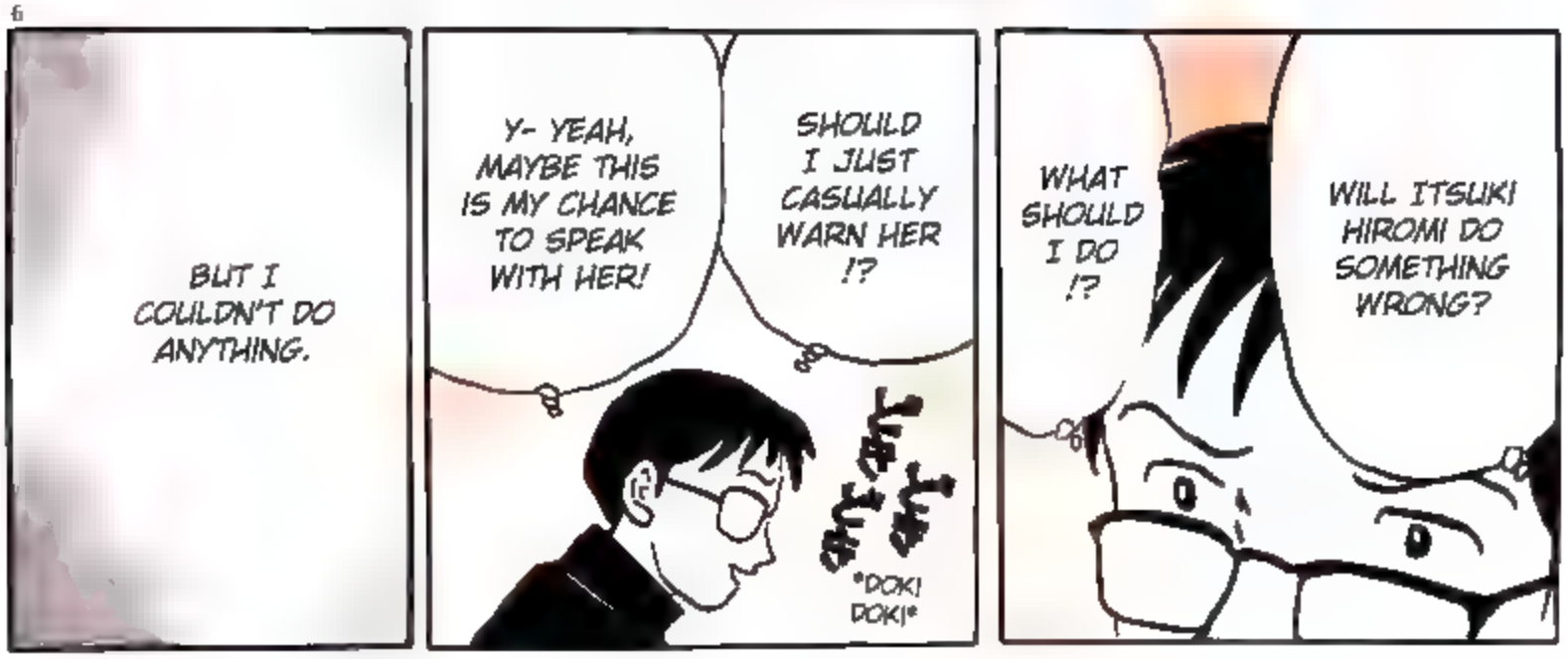
I CAN'T SEE THEM THROUGH THINGS LIKE GLASS.

I CAN'T SEE THEM ...

OH ...


SHE WAS THE CLASS'S... NO, MORE LIKE THE MADONNA OF THE SCHOOL.
ITSUKI HIROMI.

I HAD A CRUSH ON HER, TOO.
EH ...?
HOW COME ...?


BUT I COULDN'T DO ANYTHING.
Y- YEAH, MAYBE THIS IS MY CHANCE TO SPEAK WITH HER!
SHOULD I JUST CASUALLY WARN HER !?
DOKI DOKI
WHAT SHOULD I DO !?
WILL ITSUKI HIROMI DO SOMETHING WRONG?

IT SEEMS LIKE SHE GOT PREGNANT.

SHE DISAPPEARED WITHOUT A TRACE.

NOT LONG AFTER THAT, ITSUKI HIROMI QUIT SCHOOL.

IT DEEPLY HURT MY FEELINGS.

IT SEEMS LIKE SHE'S A HOSTESS IN TOKYO NOW.

I HEARD HER BOYFRIEND WAS A GANGSTER.

AFTER THAT, SOMETIMES I'D HEAR RUMORS...

7

AND UNDER THEM WAS ...

I SAW A GIANT PILLAR OF BIRDS ONE NIGHT DOWNTOWN.

I MOVED TO TOKYO, AND ENTERED UNIVERSITY. THEN ONE DAY...

SO THE RUMORS WERE TRUE...

OH ...

IN THE 20 YEARS AFTER THAT,

I HEARD NOTHING ABOUT ITSUKI HIROMI.

NEXT TO HER WAS THE PERSON SHE PROBABLY DISAPPEARED WITH

ITSUKI HIROMI.

8

COCOA PLEASE, MASTER.

OH, IT'S FREEZING OUT THERE.

AH, WELCOME.

"KARAN"

"KARAN"

"KARAN"

SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING.

THIS CUSTOMER HAS BEEN COMING HERE QUITE A LOT, RECENTLY... I GUESS SHE'S A STUDENT.

I THINK IT'S REALLY COZY.

HUH, THIS COFFEE SHOP HAS AN OLD FASHIONED FEEL TO IT.

IN SOME WAYS, HER FACE REMINDS ME OF ITSUKI HIROMI.

WOW, YOUR BOYFRIEND LOOKS REALLY COOL.

HE DOES, DOESN'T HE?

I MET HIM AT THE DRAMA CLUB.

ちらっ
"PEEKS"

THAT'S WHY I NOTICED IT ON HER.

ちら
"GLANCES"

HUH?

MASTER, AGAIN WITH THOSE EYES.

I HOPE HE WON'T CHEAT ON HER...

A GUY, HUH ...

I GUESS THAT'S HOW IT LOOKS FROM HER POINT OF VIEW.

THAT'S NOT ...

STARING AT SUCH YOUNG GIRLS WITH THOSE DIRTY EYES.

IT'S DISGU-STING.

WAIT, YOU MEAN THAT HOST IN SHINJUKU WHO'S JUST USING YOU FOR YOUR MONEY ?

HE'S NOT USING ME, HE'S MY BOYFRIEND.

BUT THERE IS A COMMITTED MAN IN MY LIFE.

TOO BAD FOR HIM,

YOU GOT A THING FOR MASTER, MAI-CHAN?

A LOCAL HOUSEWIFE, YAMADA-SAN. SHE'S SO OBSESSED WITH FORTUNE TELLING THAT SHE ENDED UP DIVORCED...

UMM ...

WELCOME ...

MASTER, HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT I SAID THE OTHER DAY ?

"KARAN" "KARAN"

I CAN SEE PEOPLE'S DESTINIES.

HMPTH. THE THING IS,

I STILL THINK IT SOUNDS SHADY.

IT'S FASCI-NATING.

WHAT!? ABOUT MAKING THE FORTUNE-TELLING CORNER!?

SHE'S NOT THAT SCARY, IS SHE?

I'M AFRAID IT'S NOT REALLY SUITABLE FOR THIS PLACE ...

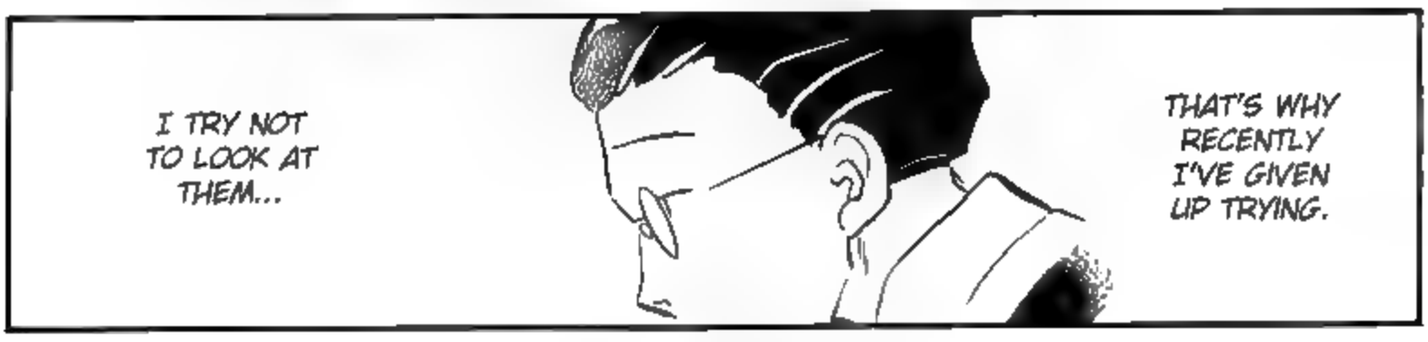
I'M SORRY, YAMADA-SAN.

YOU SHOULD LET ME SET UP A CORNER IN YOUR STORE.

HEY, MASTER.

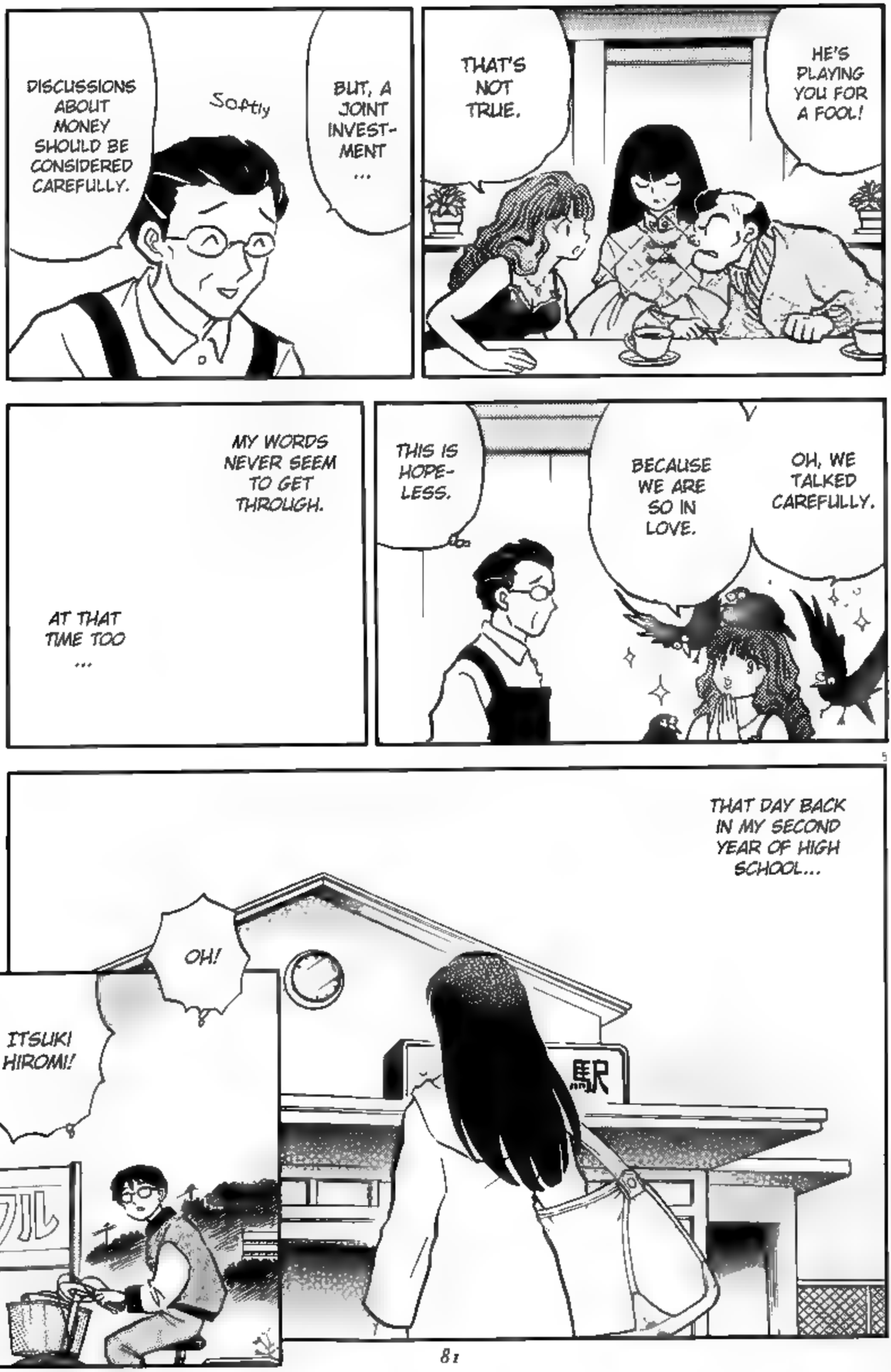
SHE SAYS SHE CAN SEE PEOPLE'S DESTINIES.

BUT WHEN SHE'S NOT HELPING THOSE PEOPLE ...



YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT SOMETHING, RIGHT?
MAS-TER.
RYO-KUN ...
COULD HE BE HER BOYFRIEND ?
EH ...
NOW THERE ARE MORE.
THE BIRDS NEST
WELL ...
HMPH.
IF ONLY FROM YOUR SIGH.
EVEN I NOTICED IT.
HUH ...?
YOU CAN'T FOOL ME, I CAN SEE THROUGH ANYTHING.
...AND YET YOU'VE BOUGHT ONE.
IT DOESN'T DO A THING.
DON'T DO IT, MASTER.
IT'S ONLY ¥ 1,000.
IT'S INFUSED WITH MY EMOTIONS.
MASTER, YOU SHOULD BUY THIS GOOD LUCK PENDANT.

I'M GOING TO OPEN A JOINT-OWNED SHOP WITH HIM.
"KARAN"
"KARAN"
YAMADA-SAN, IT LOOKS LIKE YOUR GOOD LUCK PENDANT IS WORKING.
HMM?
SOMETHING STINKS HERE...
OUR CHAT WENT REALLY SMOOTHLY.
HO HO HO, I GUESS YOU OWE ME SOME GRATITUDE.
BY HIM DO YOU MEAN THAT SHINJUKU HOST?
ARE YOU SURE THAT WAS A SINCERE CONVER-SATION ?
UMM, MAI-SAN ...
Casually
AAH ...


DISCUSSIONS ABOUT MONEY SHOULD BE CONSIDERED CAREFULLY.
Softly
BUT, A JOINT INVEST-MENT ...
THAT'S NOT TRUE.
HE'S PLAYING YOU FOR A FOOL!
MY WORDS NEVER SEEM TO GET THROUGH.
AT THAT TIME TOO ...
THIS IS HOPE-LESS.
BECAUSE WE ARE SO IN LOVE.
OH, WE TALKED CAREFULLY.
5
THAT DAY BACK IN MY SECOND YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL...
OH!
ITSUKI HIROMI!
駅

I HAD FINALLY BUILT UP MY COURAGE.

ITSUKI-SAN.

UMM ...

I COULDN'T EVEN BEGIN TO GUESS WHAT ITSUKI HIROMI WOULD DO WRONG.

SEE YOU.

PLEASE DON'T TELL ANYONE.

OH!

WHERE ARE YOU HEADING TO...?

TORII-KUN.

OH,

A GUY ...

HUH,

SLUMPS

DON'T ...

YOU SHOULDN'T GO WITH HIM...

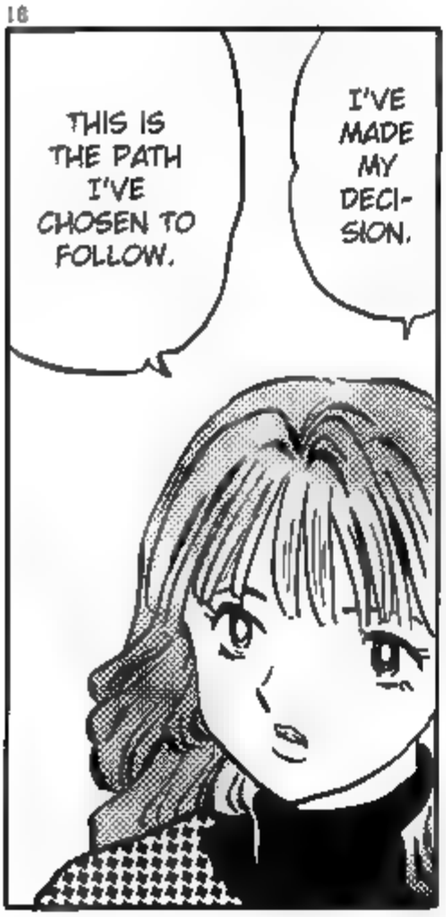
カランコロン
"KARAN"
"KARAN"
YOU CAN'T GIVE UP, RYO-KUN.
I BELIEVE IN YOU.
AT THAT TIME, I WASN'T SOMEONE WHO COULD HAVE A SAY IN HER LIFE.
SIGH.
THEY HAVE INCREASED AGAIN... IS SHE GOING TO BE OK?
I DUNNO YET.
WILL YOU GET HITCHED ?
RYO-KUN WILL BE GRADUATING SOON, RIGHT?
17
MASTER, CHECK THIS OUT ...
鳥の巣
I WONDER WHAT SHOULD I DO...?
I WONDER IF THE SOURCE OF THIS GIRL'S TROUBLES IS A MAN AS WELL.

THREE MILLION YEN!
TADA!

UMM, MAI-SAN ...
AH... THIS IS THE WORST SO FAR.

IDIOT, I'M GIVING THIS TO MY BOYFRIEND.
I'LL GET YOU LOADS MORE BACK.
LEND ME IT.
HO HO HO. FOR OPENING THE STORE, RIGHT?

16


THIS IS THE PATH I'VE CHOSEN TO FOLLOW.
I'VE MADE MY DECI-SION.

COULD YOU JUST GIVE IT A LITTLE MORE THOUGHT ...?
I'VE GOT TO SAY SOME-THING.

IT'S EVERY-THING I HAVE.
HAVEN'T YOU BEEN CAREFULLY SAVING UP ALL THAT ?

MAI-SA-...

LATER!

BUT THANKS FOR WORRYING ABOUT ME, MASTER.

I SAID WHAT I HAD TO SAY.

IT CAN'T BE HELPED.

WHY CAN'T SHE SEE SHE'S BEING TRICKED?

KARAN *KARAN* *KARAN*

HMM.

UGH, WHAT A FOOL.

SCREEEK

BANG

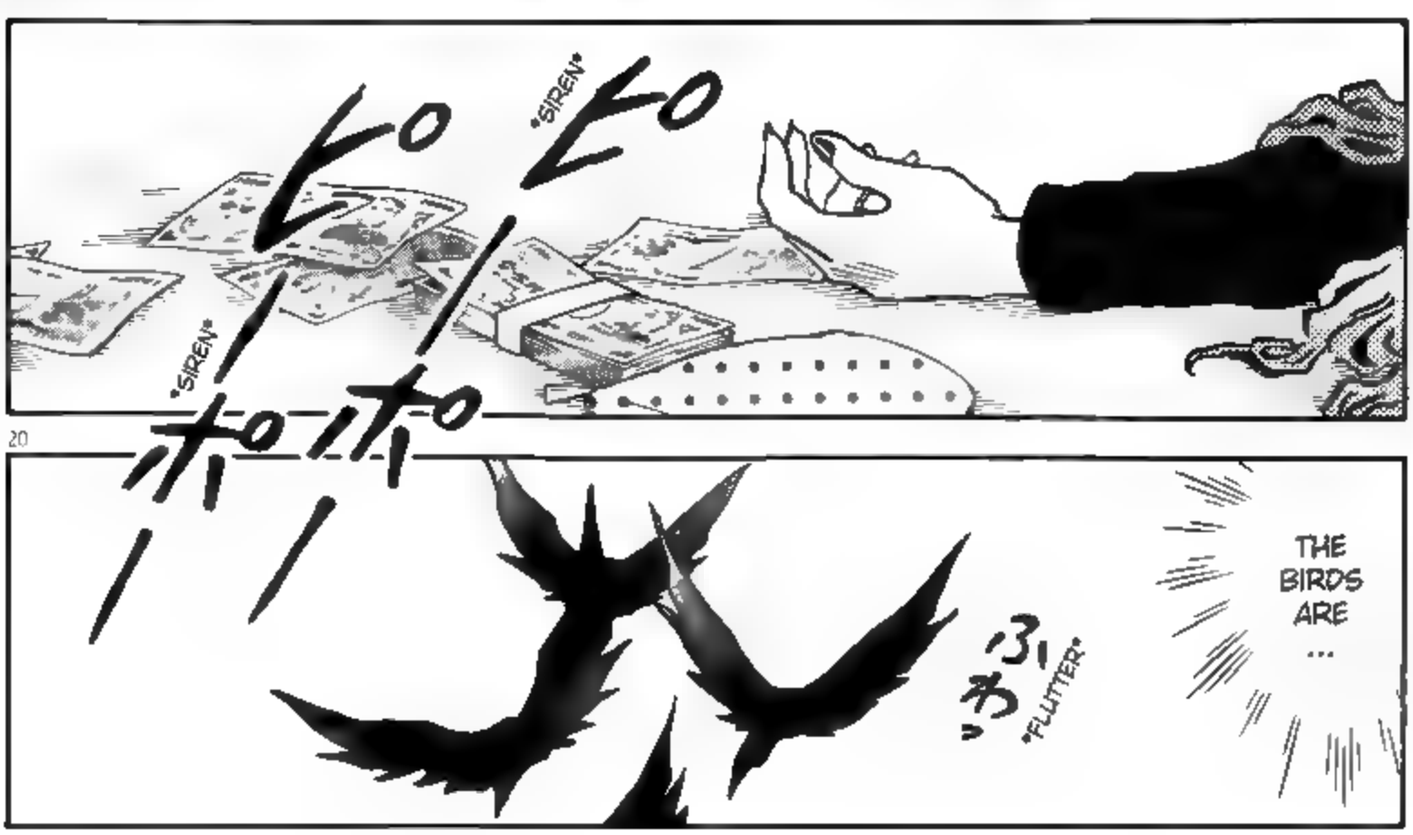
19

IT'S THE LOCAL TRANNY!

THAT'S NOT A GIRL ...

THAT GIRL WAS KNOCKED DOWN!

MAI-
SAN!


"SIREN"
"SIREN"
20
"FLUTTER"
THE
BIRDS
ARE
...

SO THE BIRDS

WERE WARNING ABOUT THE ACCIDENT!?

THEY'RE DISAPPEARING ...

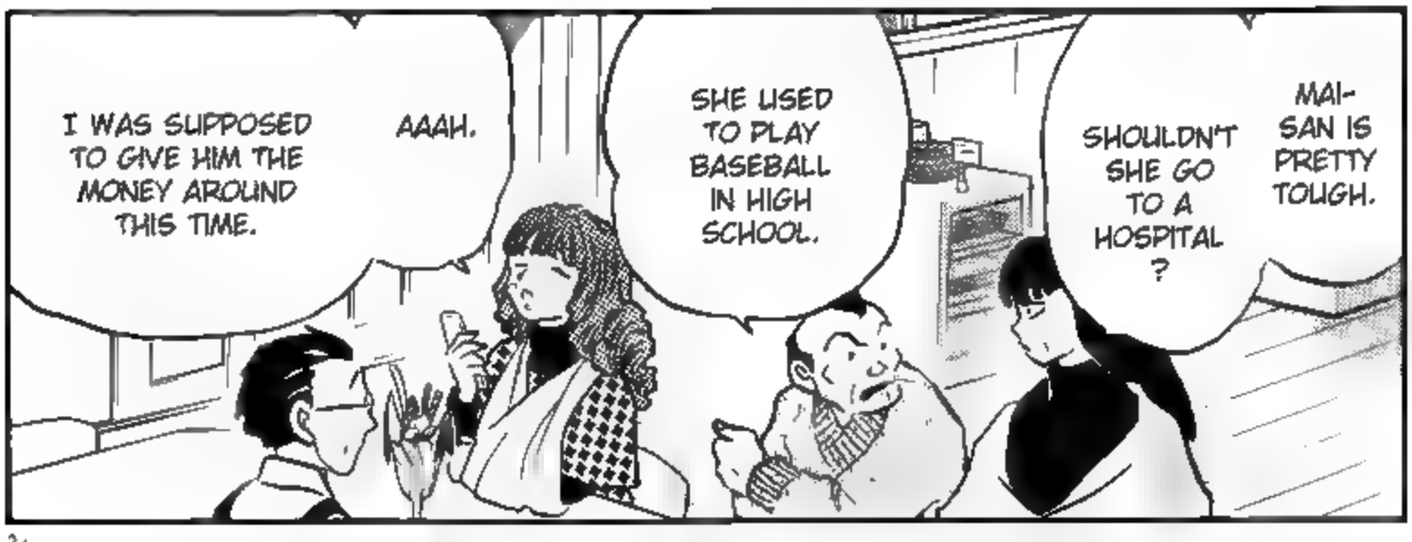
FADES AWAY

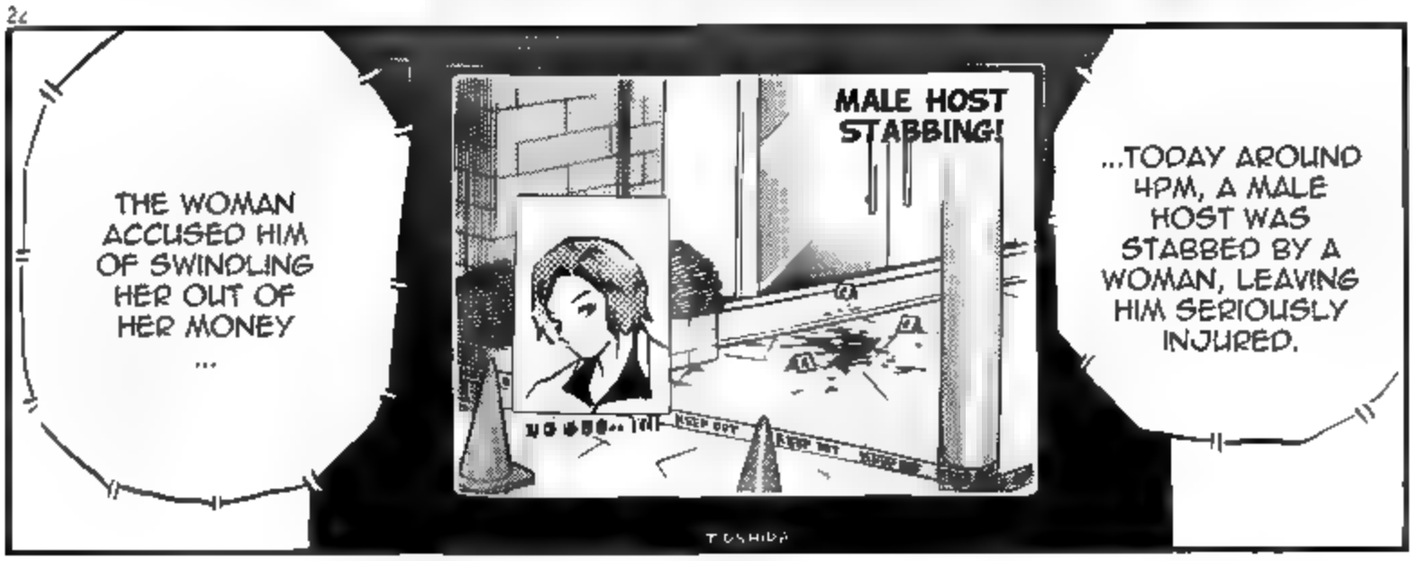
IF ONLY I'D TRIED A LITTLE HARDER TO STOP HER ...

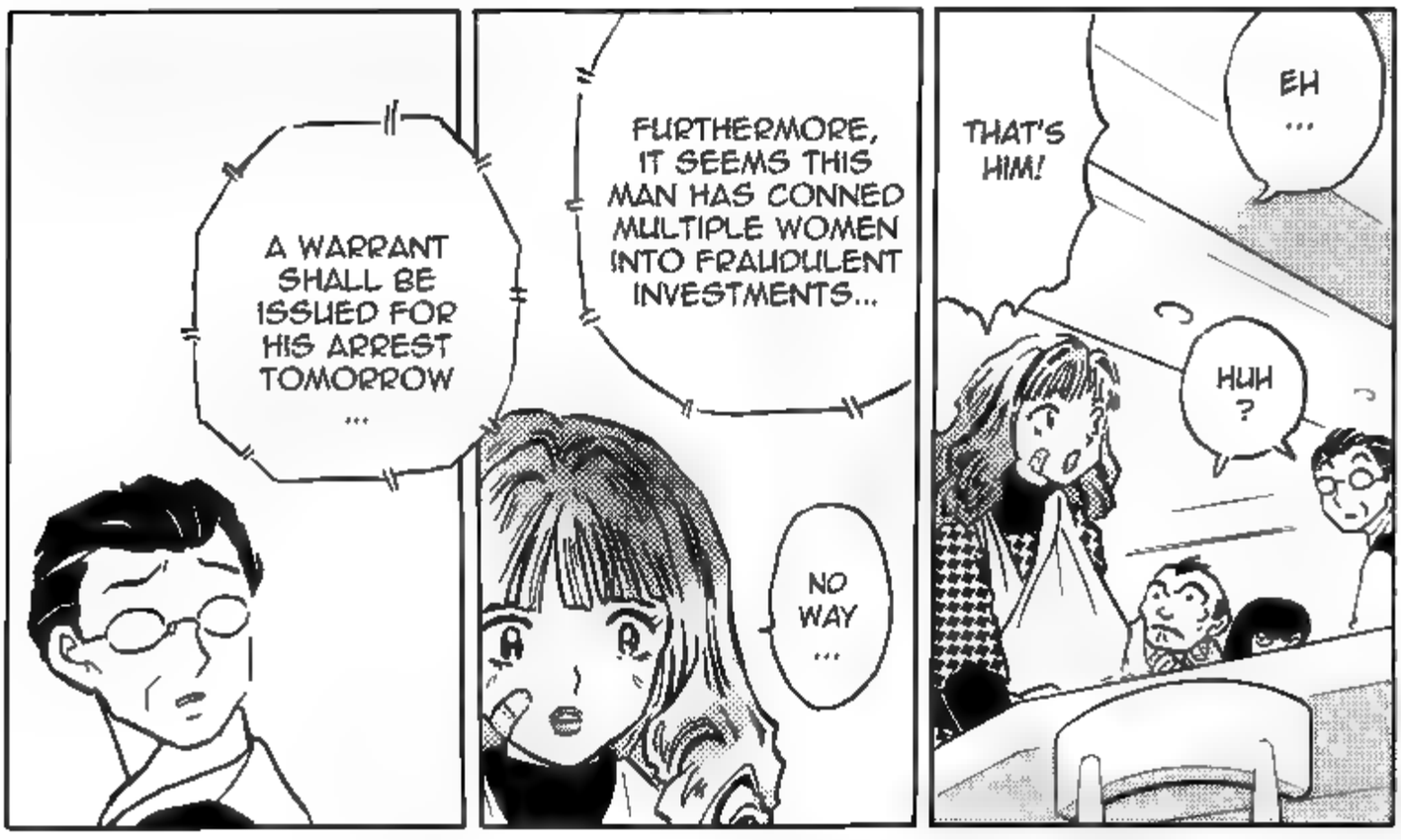
I'M REALLY, REALLY SORRY.

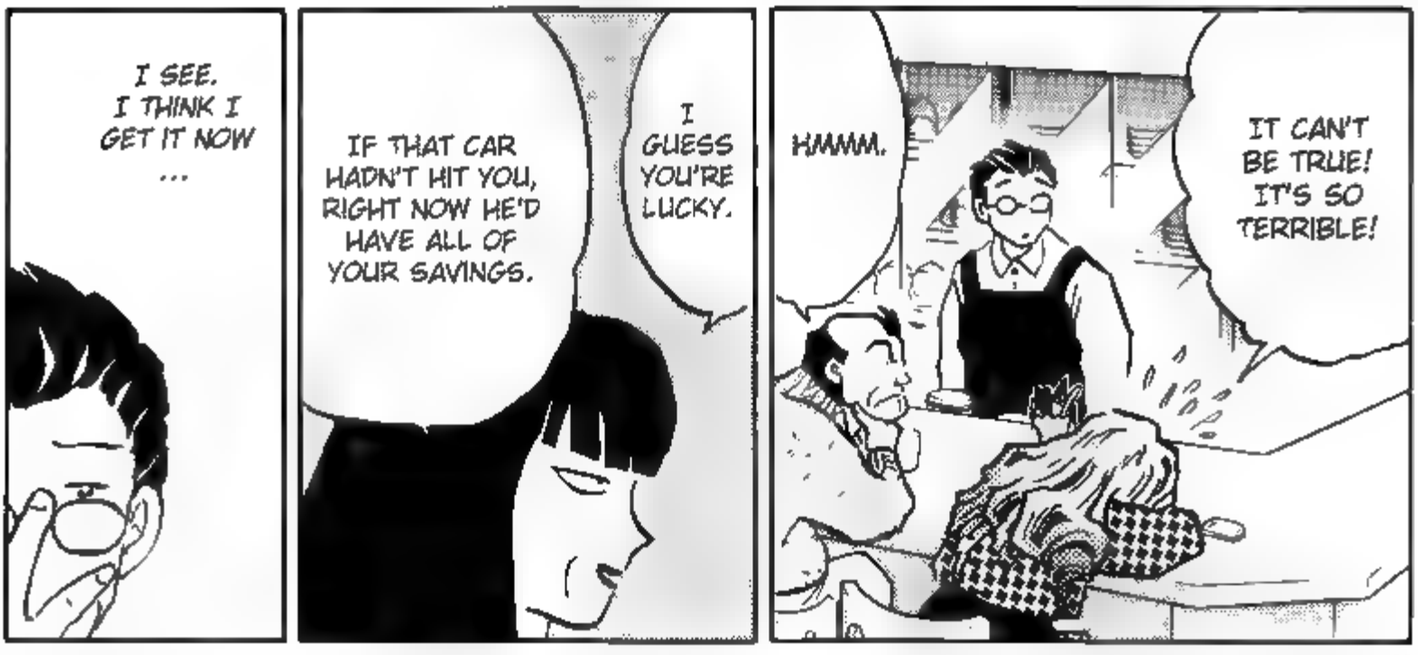
SORRY MAI-SAN.

I CAN'T SEEM TO REACH HIM ...
I THINK HIS PHONE MUST BE BROKEN.


I WAS SUPPOSED TO GIVE HIM THE MONEY AROUND THIS TIME.
AAAH.
SHE USED TO PLAY BASEBALL IN HIGH SCHOOL.
SHOULDN'T SHE GO TO A HOSPITAL ?
MAI-SAN IS PRETTY TOUGH.


THE WOMAN ACCUSED HIM OF SWINDLING HER OUT OF HER MONEY ...
MALE HOST STABBING!
...TODAY AROUND 4PM, A MALE HOST WAS STABBED BY A WOMAN, LEAVING HIM SERIOUSLY INJURED.


A WARRANT SHALL BE ISSUED FOR HIS ARREST TOMORROW ...
FURTHERMORE, IT SEEMS THIS MAN HAS CONNED MULTIPLE WOMEN INTO FRAUDULENT INVESTMENTS...
NO WAY ...
EH ...
THAT'S HIM!
HUH ?


I SEE. I THINK I GET IT NOW ...
IF THAT CAR HADN'T HIT YOU, RIGHT NOW HE'D HAVE ALL OF YOUR SAVINGS.
I GUESS YOU'RE LUCKY.
HMMM.
IT CAN'T BE TRUE! IT'S SO TERRIBLE!

23

"KARAN" カラン
"KARAN" カラン
I'M REALLY GLAD...
WHAT IS?
IT SHOULD BE FINE, NOW.
THAT'S WHY THE BIRDS LEFT HER.

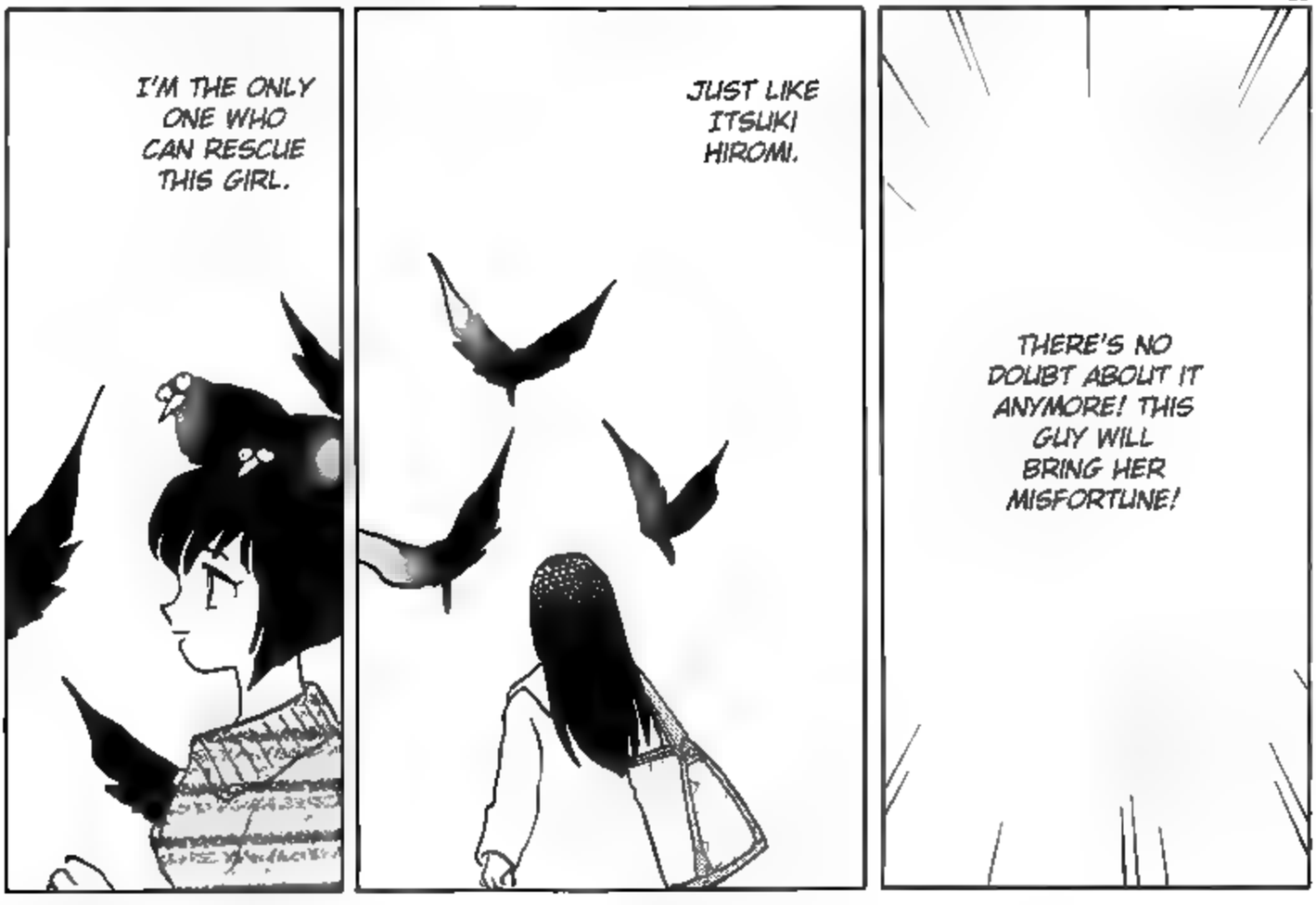
EEEEEEH !?

GOOOOO

BRRR, ITS COLD OUT THERE.

I REALLY BELIEVE IN YOU.
RYO-KUN,
AWFUL!
TH-THIS IS ...
SO THIS IS THE BOYFRIEND.
"SHAKING"

29


I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN RESCUE THIS GIRL.
JUST LIKE ITSUKI HIROMI.
THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT IT ANYMORE! THIS GUY WILL BRING HER MISFORTUNE!

I CAN CHANGE HER DESTINY.

COME ON, SUPPORT ME INSTEAD WITH THE ¥3,000,000.

SUCH A LOVING COUPLE OVER THERE.

HO HO HO ...

I CAN REMOVE THE BIRDS.

YOU'RE AN IMBE-CILE.

26

THEY NEED TO BREAK UP RIGHT NOW!

NOW'S THE TIME TO SPEAK CLEARLY.

"BURU" ぶる

"BURU" ぶる ぶる

YOU CAN'T JUST QUIT ...

DEFINITELY NO WAY!

I THINK THIS COULD BE YOUR CHANCE TO TURN IT AROUND!

SO WHAT IF YOUR JOB OFFER WAS CANCELLED DUE TO THE RECESSION.

I WANT TO FIND SERIOUS EMPLOYMENT ...

THE THING IS,

SINCE YOU LOOK SO COOL!

RYO-KUN, YOU CAN DEFINITELY BECOME AN ACTOR.

"WHOOSH"

HUH !?

BECAUSE OF HER ENCOURAGEMENT, THE BIRDS...

I'VE DECIDED IT'S ABOUT TIME TO GIVE UP ...
"CAW"
"CAW"
NO, SINCE I FAILED ANOTHER AUDITION,
"CAW"

AND WAS RECOMMENDED FOR A BRANCH MANAGER POSITION.
THAT'S WHY ...
I'VE BEEN WORKING PART TIME AT AN IZAKAYA.
THE TRUTH IS,
ARE ATTAC-KING HIM...
[TN. IZAKAYA = JAPANESE STYLE BAR / RESTAURANT

28

UGH... THIS IS ...
HMM, I WONDER ...
"CAW CAW"
HUUUH!? BUT YOU'VE GOT A GIFT FOR ACTING.

DID YOU HEAR ALL THAT!?
OH.
SEARCHING FOR A JOB, HUH ?
YOUR BOYFRIEND SEEMS VERY NICE.
AH, THANKS.
I'LL REFILL YOUR WATER.
AND SAVE UP FOR A WEDDING.
I'LL WORK MY HARDEST AT THE IZAKAYA,
THAT'S WHY ...
HERE'S THE THING,
HUH ...
YOU SEEM TO HAVE BOTH FEET ON THE GROUND, CAREFULLY CONSIDERING YOUR FUTURE ...
29
NOT AT ...
NO ...
WOULD YOU HATE IT THAT MUCH IF I WASN'T AN ACTOR?
OH ...

AND IN THAT INSTANT, THE BIRDS SUDDENLY DISAPPEARED.

FADES AWAY

-ALL.

IT SEEMS IT MADE HIM THINK ABOUT THINGS MORE SERIOUSLY.

OH.

HE WAS DEPRESSED ABOUT HIS JOB OFFER CANCELLATION, SO I JUST WANTED TO ENCOURAGE HIM.

I HEARD THE FULL STORY THE NEXT DAY...

ACTUALLY, I'M STILL LIVING OFF MY PARENTS.

WOW, THAT'S QUITE A MANSION.

TOSIDA

AND FOR TODAY'S HOUSE VISIT,

AND SO ...

WE'LL MEET SOME TRENDY AND UNIQUE ACTORS.

THE BIRD'S NEST

WHERE HAVE I SEEN THAT FACE BEFORE ...?

... EH?

AND THIS IS HIS MOTHER, HIROMI.

GREET-INGS.

HIS FATHER USED TO BE A FAMOUS B-MOVIE VILLAIN.

ITSUKI HIROMI !?

YES, THAT'S RIGHT.

OH ...

AT THAT TIME, I HAD HIM INSIDE MY BELLY.

AND YOU DISAPPEARED WITHOUT A TRACE FROM YOUR HOMETOWN.

I SEE ...

I WAS SO HAPPY WHEN HE FINALLY GOT A PART.

MY HUSBAND WASN'T POPULAR YET, SO I MADE ENDS MEET WORKING AS A HOSTESS.

I'M REALLY GLAD FOR YOU.

SO YOU FOUND HAPPINESS FOR YOURSELF.

I GET THE FEELING THAT YOU'VE ALSO SAVED ME.

YOU SURELY CHASED AWAY THE BIRDS OF FATE JUST WITH YOUR OWN STRENGTH.

AND SO,

FROM NOW ON I'M NOT GOING TO HESITATE TO USE MY POWER TO HELP PEOPLE.

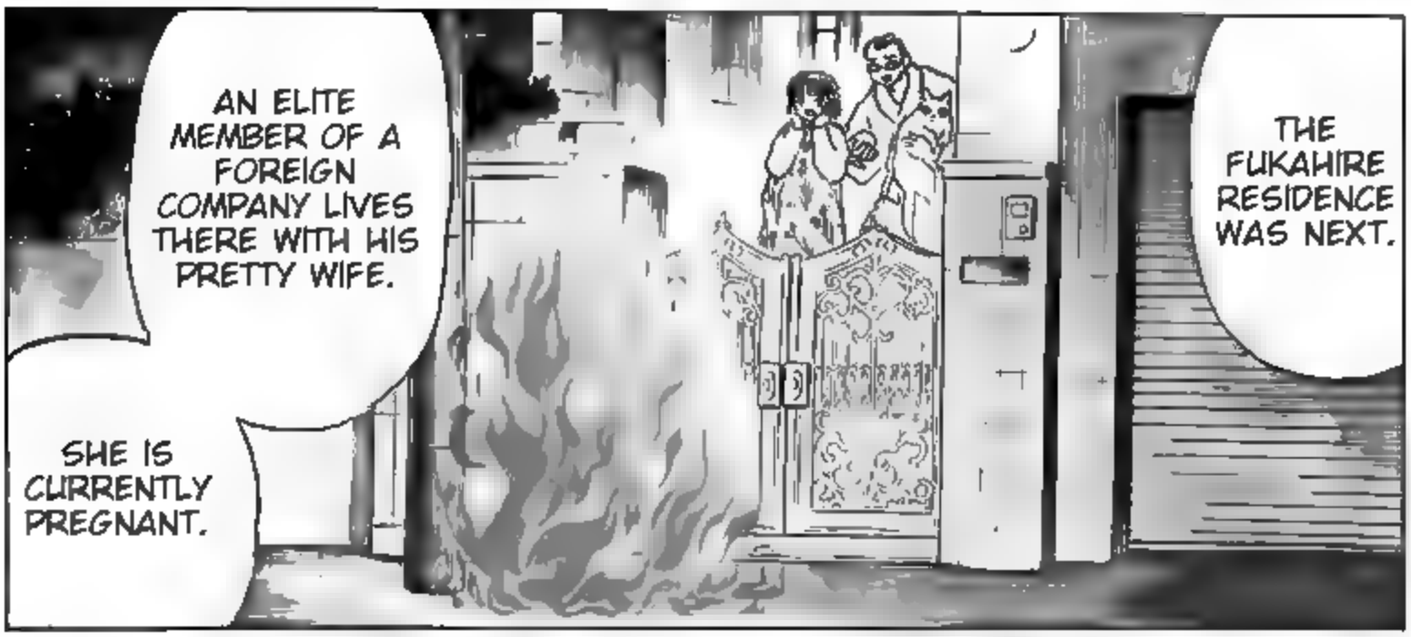
I'LL USE IT WITHOUT ANY REGRETS.

NO WAY.

QUIT GAMBLING ON HORSES.

Happiness List

THE FIRST HOUSE TO BE DAMAGED,
WAS THE NEWLY-BUILT OTORO RESI-DENCE.


AN ELITE MEMBER OF A FOREIGN COMPANY LIVES THERE WITH HIS PRETTY WIFE.
SHE IS CURRENTLY PREGNANT.
THE FUKAHIRE RESIDENCE WAS NEXT.

THE FAMILY OF 4 WERE ENJOYING A SUMMER BARBECUE IN THEIR GARDEN.
AND THEN THREE DAYS AGO IT WAS THE WAGYUU RESIDENCE.

Saiwai* town neighborhood association committee meeting.

*SAIWAI = HAPPINESS

A SMALL FIRE IS LIT EITHER AT THEIR FRONT DOOR OR OUTSIDE THE GATE...

ONLY WEALTHY HOUSEHOLDS ARE BEING TARGETED.

THIS IS ARSON, ISN'T IT?

IT'S FRIGHTENING.

WHAT A PAIN.

UGH...

I LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR COOPERATION...

THE PURPOSE OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION IS TO GO ON NIGHTLY WATCH PATROLS.

I LIVE WITH MY MOTHER-IN-LAW.

I'LL BE OFF, THEN.

YOU BE CAREFUL NOW, MAYUKO-SAN.

MY HUSBAND WORKS AWAY FROM HOME.

NAMIKI-SAN.

BRRR, IT'S COLD.

CHILLING WIND

4

YOU'RE HERE FOR THE EVENING PATROL, YES?

AH, NAKATANI-SAN.

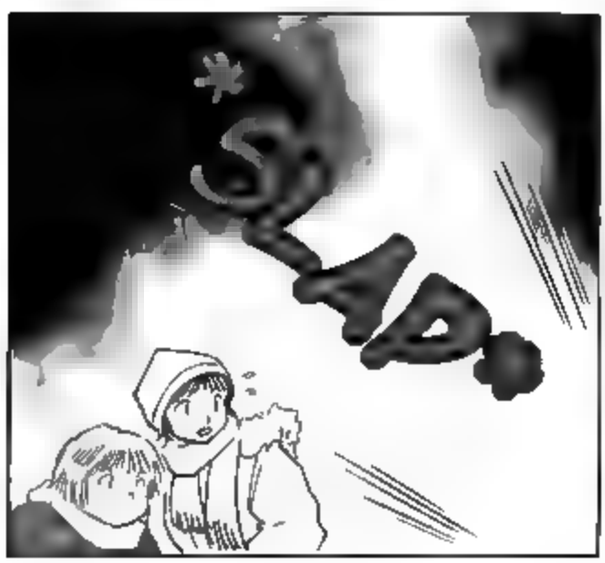
LET'S GO TOGETHER.

SHE'S A WIDOW WHO MANAGES APART-MENTS.
WHAT WITH IT BEING SO COLD.
THIS IS SUCH A PAIN THOUGH,
NAKATANI-SAN KNOWS ABOUT EVERYTHING ABOUT THE NEIGH-BORHOOD.

I WONDER IF SOMEONE'S JUST JEALOUS OF THEM.
IT'S AWFUL.
IT'S LIKE ONLY HAPPY-LOOKING FAMILIES ARE BEING TARGETED.
STILL, IT'S PRETTY CREEPY.

5

THE HUSBAND IS UNEMPLOYED AND DRINKS A LOT.
THAT'S THE SHIMODA RESI-DENCE ...


SLAP!

CRASH
YOU'RE SLEEPING AROUND, AREN'T YOU?
YASUE! WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING AT SUCH A LATE TIME!?
YOU STINK OF BOOZE!
I ALREADY TOLD YOU I'M GOING ON THE EVENING PATROL.

SIGH.

CREAK

HMM, IT'S HARD TO KNOW WHAT TO SAY, ISN'T IT?

WHISPER

AH, WE JUST SAW SOMETHING PRETTY TERRIBLE.

OK, EVERYONE'S HERE NOW.

ALRIGHT, LET'S HEAD OFF.

WATCH OUT FOR FIRES.

BE ON YOUR GUARD.

CLINK

CLINK

MARCHING

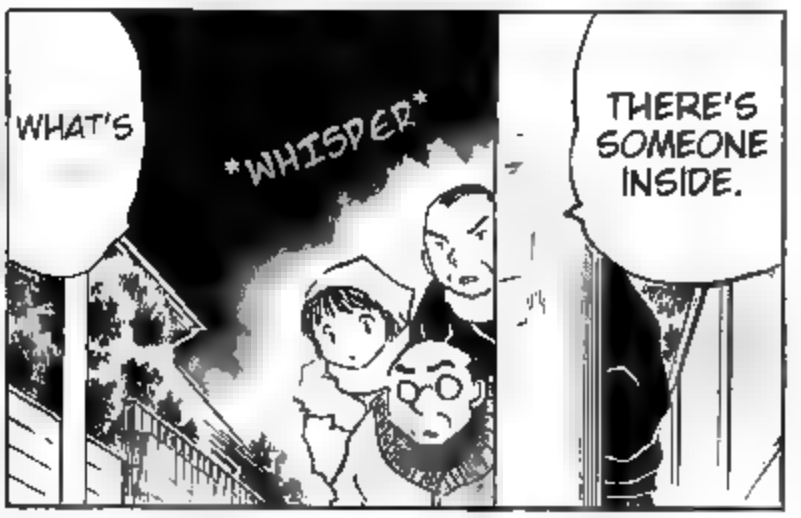
WE'VE SUDDENLY ENDED UP WITH A FIRE PREVENTION DEMON.

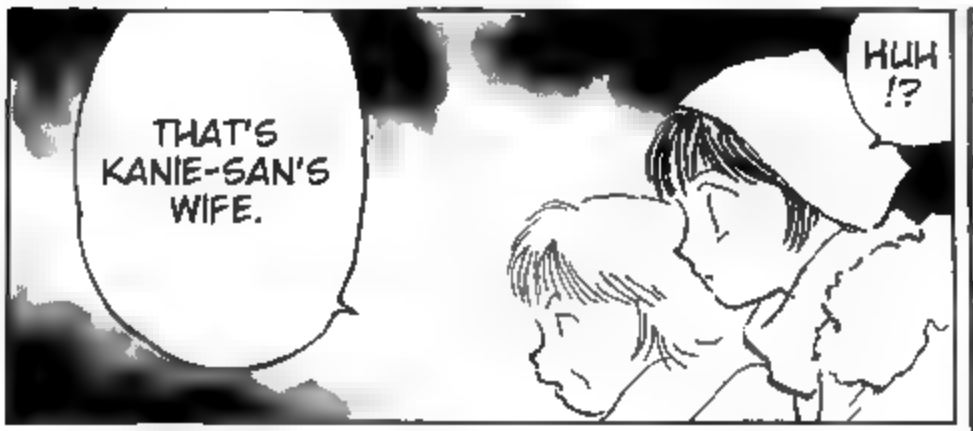
THERE'S PLENTY OF NICE HOUSES JUST UP AHEAD, ISN'T THERE?

THAT CAR IN FRONT OF THE KANIE'S HOUSE... DOESN'T IT SEEM SUSPICIOUS?

SSSH!
EH?

.....


WHAT'S
WHISPER
THERE'S SOMEONE INSIDE.


THAT'S KANIE-SAN'S WIFE.
HUH !?

AH, SOMEONE GOT OUT.

GOSSIPING
I WONDER WHO SHE WAS WITH.
IT LOOKED LIKE SHE WAS KISSING SOMEONE...

THUNK

SHUT IT, YOU OLD HAG!

WATCH OUR FOR FIRE!

CLINK

CLINK

WE DIDN'T SEE A THING.

EVERY ONE,

IT SEEMS HE WANTS TO GET INTO MEDICAL COLLEGE.

THEIR SON FAILED HIS COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMS 5 YEARS IN A ROW.

AH, IT'S THAT HOUSE.

I WONDER WHAT THAT WAS.

6

YASUE, WHERE ARE YOU OFF TO!?

THE NEXT DAY TOO

I TOLD YOU, I'M ON EVENING PATROL-

MMM

THAT WAS HOW OUR DAILY PATROL STARTED.

IT CAN HAPPEN AT ANY HOUSE.

AND YET IT'S SUCH A SPLENDID HOUSE.

AH!
OH.
SIGH.
CREAK
YOU SHOULDN'T APOLOGIZE ...
NO...
FORGIVE ME.
OH MY...
HE BEGAN DRINKING WHEN HIS JOB BECAME REDUNDANT.
HE'S A GOOD PERSON, BUT...
HOW EMBARRASSING.
ARE YOU OK?
SHIMODA-SAN,
TWITCH
NOW HE FEELS NOTHING BUT BITTERNESS TO THE WORLD...

HMM, I THOUGHT ABOUT IT ALL NIGHT. IT'S PRETTY SUSPICIOUS.

ABOUT HIM BLAMING THE WORLD?

ABOUT SHIMODA-SAN'S HUSBAND?

HEY, WHAT DO YOU THINK?

"CAW"

"CAW"

AH, GOOD MORNING.

"PANTING"

BUT... WE DON'T HAVE ANY PROOF IT'S HIM.

SHOULD WE INFORM THE POLICE?

OH, OTORO-SAN.

THANKS FOR DOING THAT.

"PANTING"

UMM... I HEARD YOU WERE DOING AN EVENING PATROL?

YES, NOW I'M TERRIFIED.
AH THAT'S RIGHT, YOU WERE THE FIRST VICTIM OF THE ARSON.
BUT I SAW A GUY FROM BEHIND AS HE RAN AWAY.
I'VE ALREADY TOLD THE POLICE,
DIDN'T YOU SEE ANYONE SUSPICIOUS HANGING AROUND?
HEY OTORO-SAN,
AND I WAS TOO SCARED TO CHASE AFTER HIM BY MYSELF...
BUT MY HUSBAND WAS AWAY THAT DAY,
YES?
HEY, PRES-IDENT.
WATCH OUT FOR FIRE!
CLINK *CLINK*
HMM, LET ME THINK...
DID YOU SMELL ANY ALCOHOL AT THE TIME?
PANTING

AH, HE CALLED THIS EVENING.

CLINK

CLINK

MUMBLING

I WONDER IF WE'LL SEE SHIMODA-SAN'S WIFE TODAY...?

TODAY IS FRIDAY, AFTER ALL.

BUT NEVER MIND THAT EVERYONE,

I WONDER IF HER HUSBAND HIT HER AGAIN.

IT SEEMS SHE CAN'T MAKE IT AS SHE HAD AN INJURY...

THAT WAS THE FOURTH CASE OF ARSON.

CLANG
CLANG
WEEEOOOH

HUH...? WHAT'S THAT GOT TO DO WITH IT?

IT WAS AT THE IBERIKO RESIDENCE. THEY WERE OVERJOYED BECAUSE THEIR DAUGHTER HAD JUST ACCEPTED A MARRIAGE PROPOSAL.

IT LOOKS LIKE A SMALL FIRE WAS STARTED...

THE ARSON ALWAYS HAPPENS ON A FRIDAY.

RESTLESS

IT'S LIKE HE'S MOCKING US.

DAMN PYRO-MANIAC.

SHI-MODA-SAN!?

EH...?

OH...

WHY DID SHE COME HERE...!?

SNEAKING AWAY

SHIMODA-SAN COULDN'T HAVE...

WHY WOULD SHE COME TO THE SCENE OF THE ARSON...?

SHE'S EVEN MORE MISERABLE THAN HER HUSBAND...

BUT IF I THINK ABOUT IT,

THUMP
THUMP

ALTHOUGH... IT SEEMS SHE LIED ABOUT TAKING A DAY OFF...

IT COULDN'T BE...

I JUST FIGURED OUT SOMETHING HUGE!

NAKA-TANI-SAN.

DING DONG

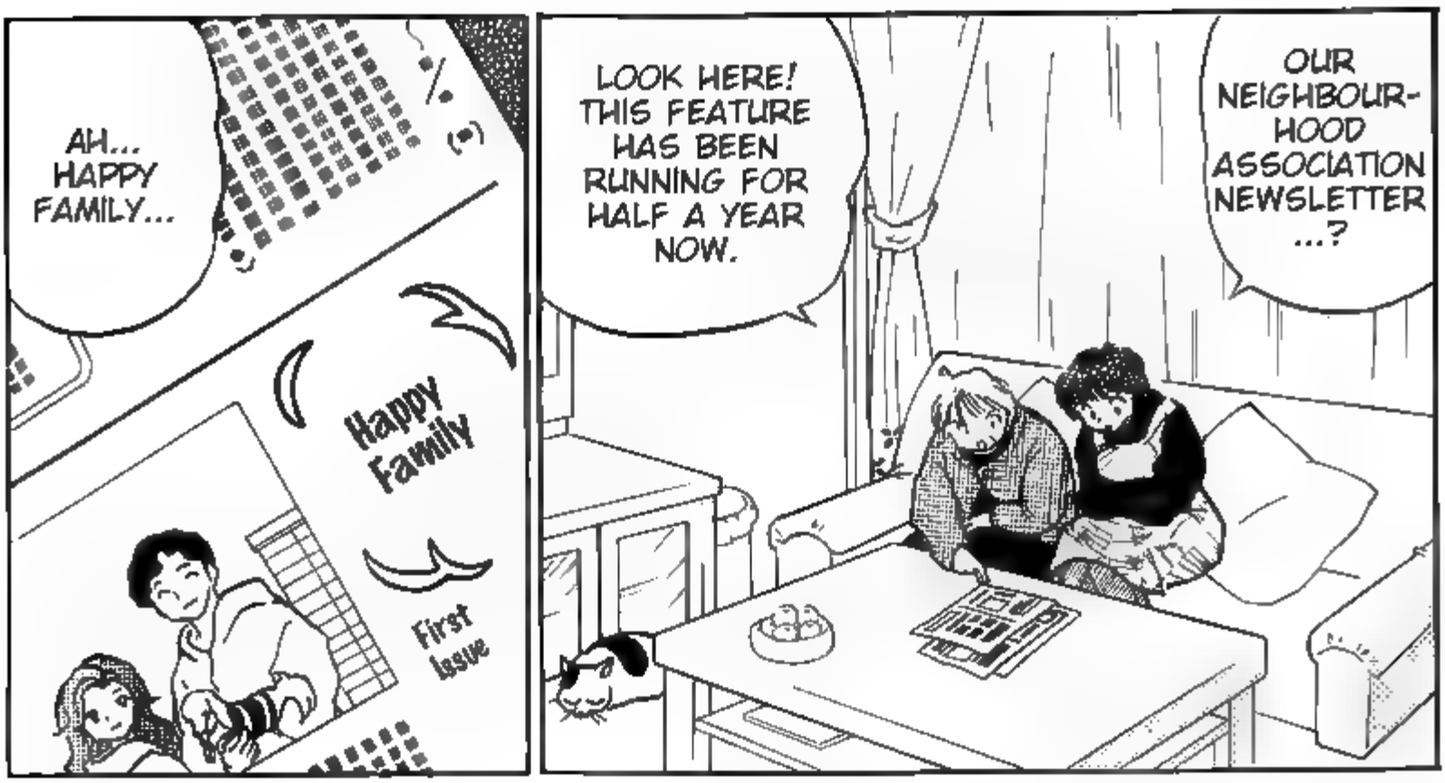
14

Cherry Blossom Festival Commences

Introducing a new committee member! Welcome to the team!

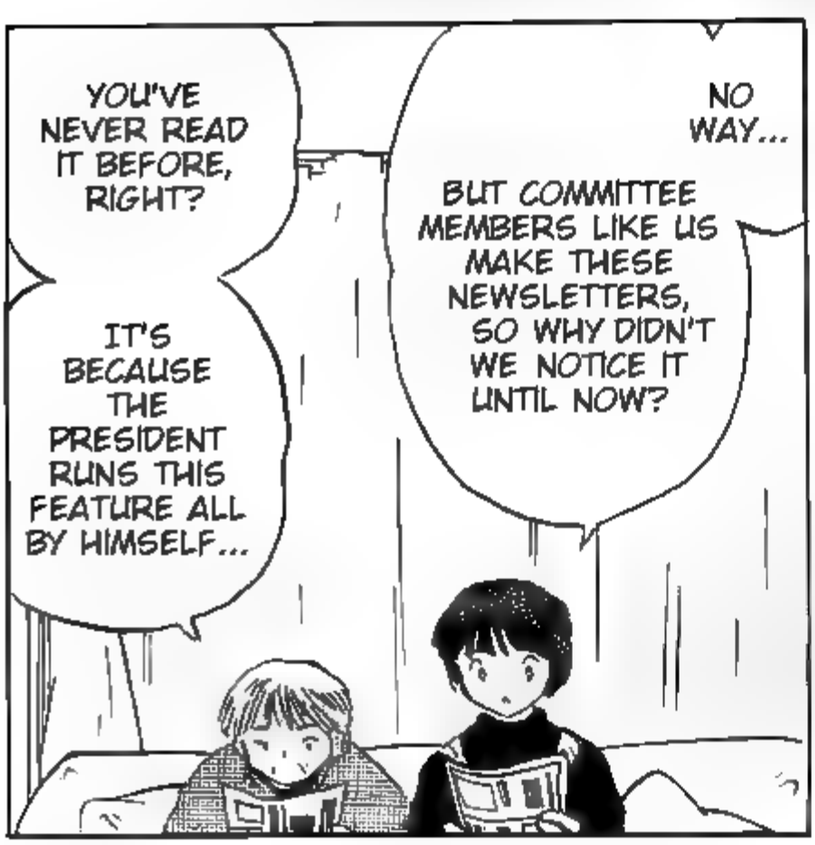
Saiwai Town Council News Letter

2007


AH... HAPPY FAMILY...
Happy Family
First Issue
LOOK HERE! THIS FEATURE HAS BEEN RUNNING FOR HALF A YEAR NOW.
OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER...?

AND THE FOURTH FAMILY TO BE INTRODUCED WAS THE IBERIKO FAMILY.
THERE'S OTORO-SAN, FUKAHIRE-SAN, WAGYUU-SAN...
OH, SO IT IS.

15


YOU'VE NEVER READ IT BEFORE, RIGHT?
IT'S BECAUSE THE PRESIDENT RUNS THIS FEATURE ALL BY HIMSELF...
NO WAY...
BUT COMMITTEE MEMBERS LIKE US MAKE THESE NEWSLETTERS, SO WHY DIDN'T WE NOTICE IT UNTIL NOW?

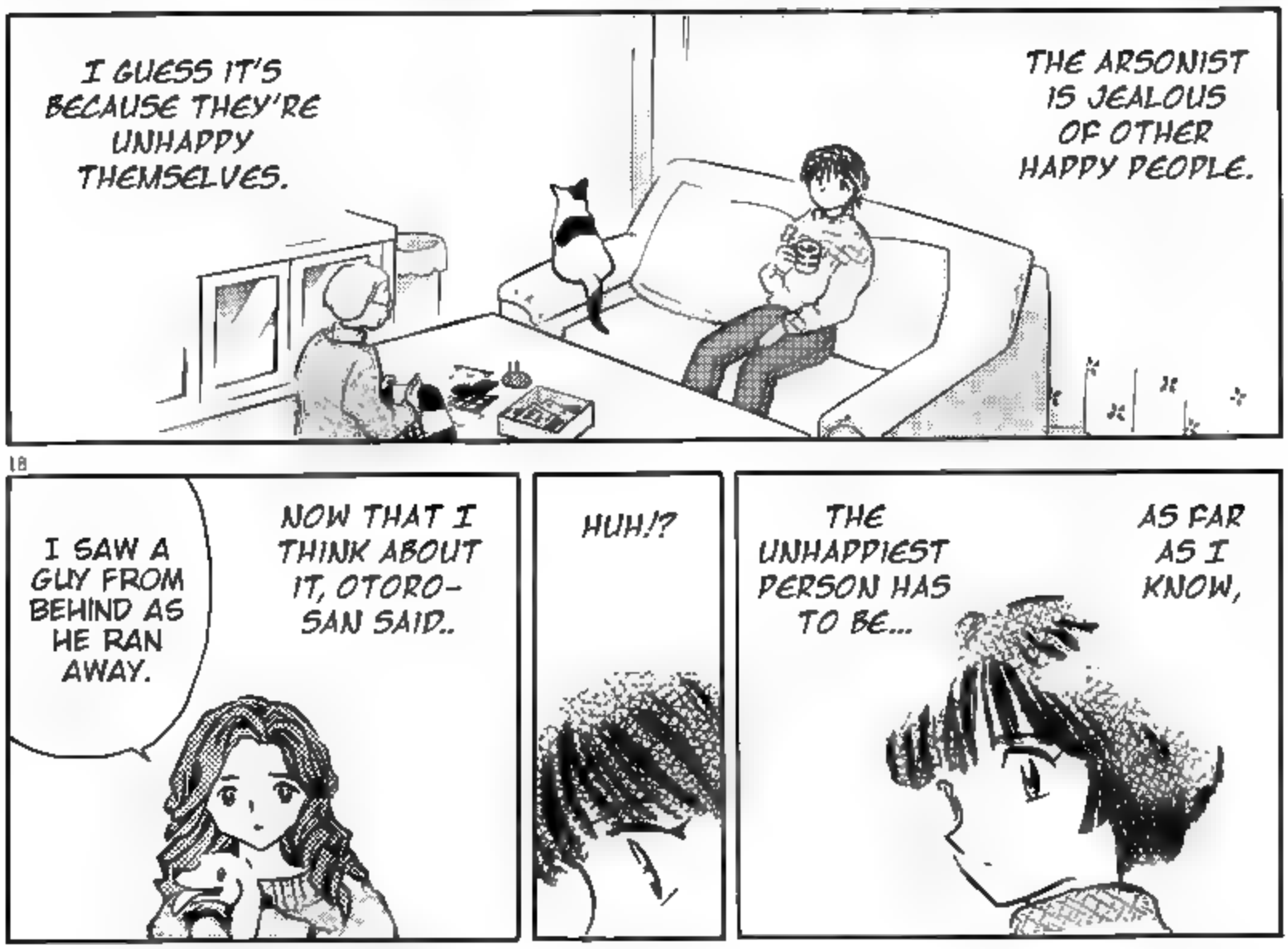
MEANING THEY LIVE IN THIS TOWN.
IN OTHER WORDS, THE CULPRIT HAS BEEN READING THIS NEWSLETTER...
GLEAM

NOTE: THE LABELS ON THE SHELVES ARE TYPES OF RICE, KOSHIHIKARI AND SASANISHIKI

I FIGURED IT OUT AFTER THE IBERIKO FIRE.
I TOLD THEM.
SO PRESIDENT, MAYBE WE SHOULD GO TO THE POLICE WITH THIS...
BUT I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! THE ARTICLES I WROTE...
YEAH, IT CAN'T BE A COINCIDENCE.
コシヒカリ
ササニシキ
THE FAMILIES FROM YOUR ARTICLES WHO HAVEN'T BEEN ATTACKED YET.
BUT THERE ARE STILL SOME HOUSES LEFT.
HUH...
SO LET'S KEEP IT TO OURSELVES FOR NOW.
WE DON'T WANT TO CAUSE PANIC FOR THOSE FAMILIES,
BUT,
YES, WE SHOULD FOCUS OUR ATTENTION ON THOSE AREAS.
YES...
UMM... SHIMODA-SAN.
CLINK
CLINK
WATCH OUT FOR FIRE!

CLINK
CLINK
.....
.....
SORRY I COULDN'T MAKE IT LAST TIME.
YES...
I HAD TO GO TO THE HOSPITAL.
YOUR INJURIES... ARE YOU REALLY OK?
YEAH, THIS IS PRETTY SUSPICIOUS...
SHE DIDN'T SAY SHE WAS AT THE SCENE OF THE CRIME...
THANKS FOR ALL YOUR HARD WORK ON NIGHT PATROL.
GOOD EVENING, OTORO-SAN.
CLINK
CLINK
AH.
PANTING
WE FEEL SAFER THANKS TO YOU.
WE'RE REALLY GRATE-FUL.

YOU CAN'T HELP IT, GIVEN HOW BUSY YOUR JOB IS AND ALL.
I WORRY ABOUT MY WIFE WHEN I'M AWAY AT WORK.
.....
SIGH
...IT MUST BE NICE TO BE SO CLOSE.
WELL, PLEASE EXCUSE US


I GUESS IT'S BECAUSE THEY'RE UNHAPPY THEMSELVES.
THE ARSONIST IS JEALOUS OF OTHER HAPPY PEOPLE.
18
I SAW A GUY FROM BEHIND AS HE RAN AWAY.
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, OTORO-SAN SAID..
HUH!?
THE UNHAPPIEST PERSON HAS TO BE...
AS FAR AS I KNOW,

I WASN'T SURE IF I SHOULD TELL YOU THIS, BUT...

I SAW SOME-THING.

HUH?

HEY, NAMIKI-SAN.

I'M BACK TO SQUARE ONE.

HMM ...

THE CULPRIT IS... A MAN...?

WHAT !?

SHIMODA-SAN'S DRUNK HUSBAND.

ON THE NIGHT OF THE FOURTH ARSON ATTACK AT THE IBERIKO HOUSE, I SAW HIM AMONGST THE ONLOOKERS...

19

BUT I KEPT QUIET ALL THIS TIME!

SMASH

I SAW IT, YOU KNOW!

IT WASN'T HIS WIFE.

SO IT WASN'T HIS WIFE!?

YOU WENT TO THE SCENE OF THE ARSON, DIDN'T YOU?

LAST FRIDAY,

RUNNING

SHI-MODA-SAN!?

OH SHUT UP, I WAS COMING BACK FROM THE OFF-LICENSE.

BESIDES, HOW WOULD YOU KNOW I WAS THERE?

WHA-WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

STOMP *STOMP*

THUMP *THUMP*

CRASH

I WAS HEADING HOME FROM THE HOSPITAL AFTER YOU HIT ME.

WAIT, DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE THE ARSONIST...?

SLAP

YOU SAID YOU WERE GOING ON NIGHT PATROL,

BUT YOU WERE ACTUALLY STARTING FIRES...?

GLUB

!

SHIMODA-SAN!

BAM

IS A SERIOUS CRIME, ISN'T IT?

ARSON ...

IF THE CULPRIT GAVE THEM-SELVES UP...

WELL, IT'S...

AT ANY RATE, CALM DOWN AND LETS TALK THIS OVER.

WE HEARD EVERYTHING.

GIVE YOUR-SELF UP!

JUST AS I SUSPECTED...

THE CULPRIT WAS SHIMODA-SAN...!?

SHI-MO-DA-SAN...

IF THEY GAVE THEMSELVES UP, THEY'D GO A LITTLE EASIER ON THEM, RIGHT!?

22

YOU TOO...

YOU'VE BECOME SO BITTER TOWARD THE WORLD.

IT'S HEARTBREAKING! YOU USED TO BE SUCH A DILLIGENT, HARD WORKER UNTIL YOU WERE LAID OFF.

I... HAVE NO IDEA.

SO WHICH ONE DO YOU THINK IT IS?

THAT'S WHY YOU DID THIS, RIGHT...?

YOU SUFFERED SO MUCH PAIN...

IT'S CLOSE!

IT MUST BE ARSON AGAIN.

OR YOU...

PHEW

THEN I GUESS... IT WASN'T YOU...

IT'S FRIDAY ...

TODAY IS...

MMM, THESE COOKIES ARE GREAT.
OH THOSE.
EVERY NIGHT IS HARD.
THEY STILL HAVEN'T CAUGHT THE ARSONIST YET.
Namiki
SIGH
HE'S REALLY BUSY AT WORK AND COMES HOME LATE TOO.
HUH.
HE SAID "THANKS FOR DOING THE NIGHT PATROL"...
THEY'RE FROM A HOTEL IN KOBE.
OTORO-SAN'S HUSBAND GAVE THEM TO ME.
HE MUST BE WORRIED ABOUT HIS WIFE.
HE'S ALWAYS AWAY ON BUSINESS TRIPS ON FRIDAY TOO.

CAVIAR-CHAN, LET'S GO FOR WALKIES.

"PANTING"

EVERY FRIDAY!?

IT'S OTORO-SAN!?

DON'T TELL ME...

NAKA-TANI-SAN.

NAMIKI-SAN GOT SOME COOKIES TOO, RIGHT?

MUNCH *MUNCH*

NO, HOLD ON...

STILL, IT'S SURPRISING... THAT THE FIRST VICTIM COULD ACTUALLY BE...

STEALTHY

PANTING

FIRST OFF, WE DON'T EVEN HAVE A MOTIVE.

WE HAVEN'T PROVED THAT SHE'S A CRIMINAL JUST YET...

20

NO MATTER HOW YOU LOOK AT IT, SHE SHOULD BE HAPPY.

SHE HAS A LOVING HUSBAND AND A NEWLY-BUILT HOUSE.

AH THAT'S RIGHT, ON THE FIRST NIGHT OF PATROL WE SAW THE WIFE KISSING SOMEONE IN A CAR THERE...

THAT'S KANIE-SAN'S HOUSE.

SHE STOPPED ...

WAS RECENTLY PUT IN THE NEWS-LETTER.

FUR-THER-MORE, THE KANIE FAMILY

THIS IS THE LAST HOUSE NOT TO HAVE BEEN ATTACKED!

27

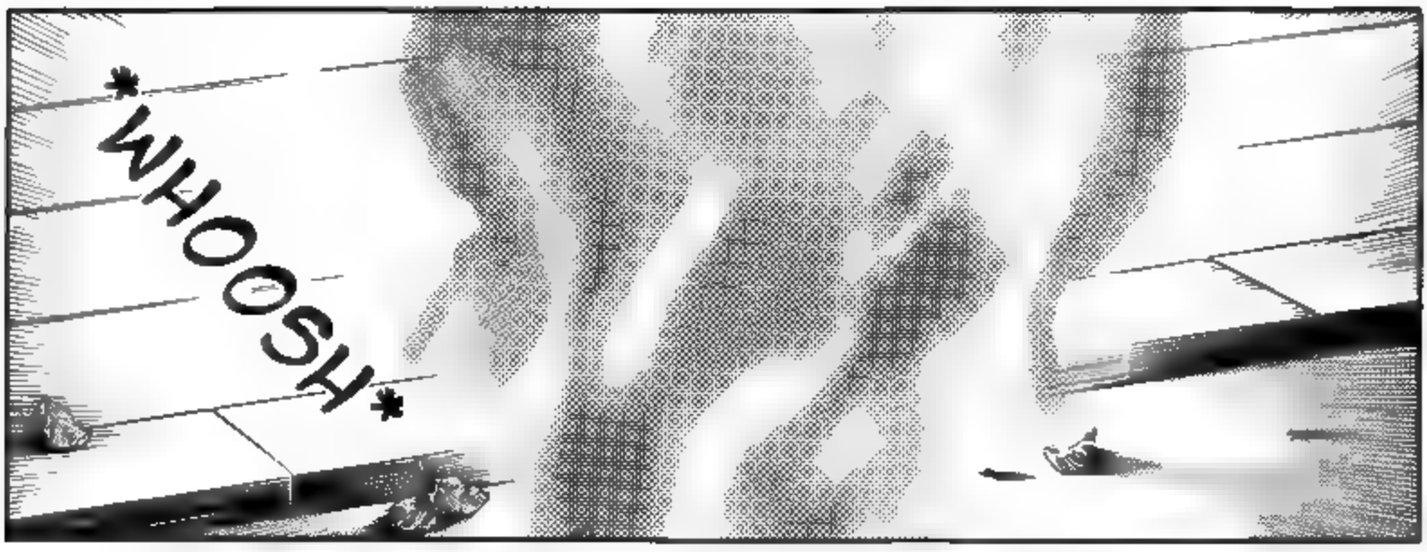
GLUB
GLUB
GLUB

SHHHICK

THAT'S FAR ENOUGH!!

GOTCHA!!

EH!?


WHOOSH

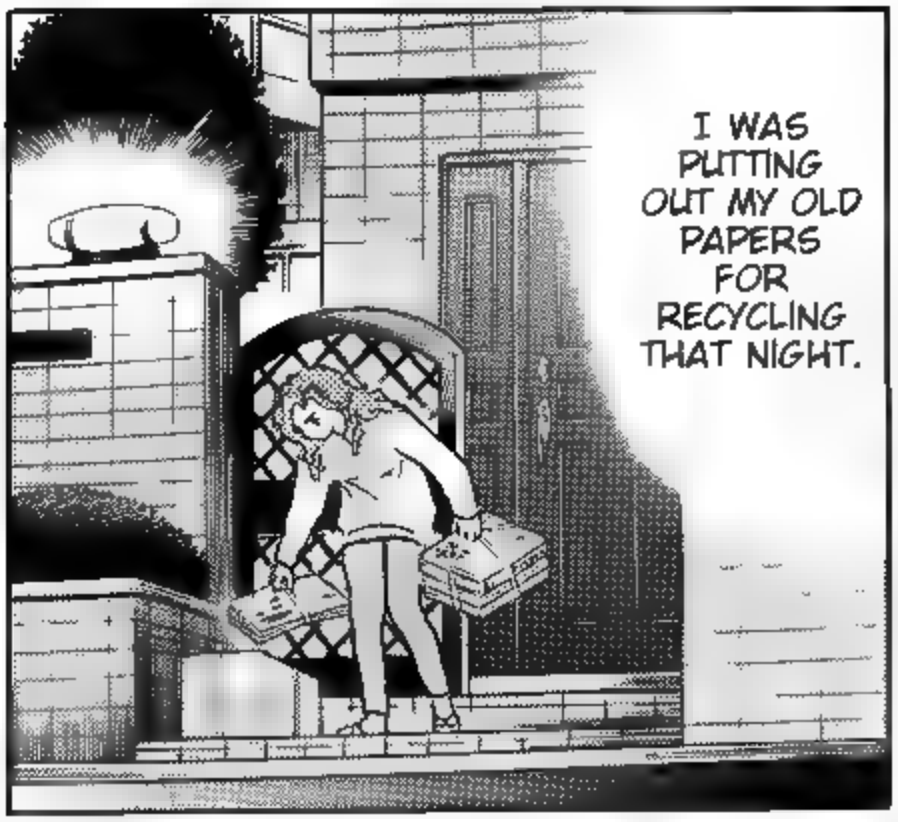
I CALLED HIM IN ADVANCE,
PRES-IDENT!?
WHEN OTORO-SAN STARTED HER STROLL!
CHARGE

AAAH, FIRE!
THAT'S FAR ENOUGH, OTORO-SAN.
POPS UP
ROAR

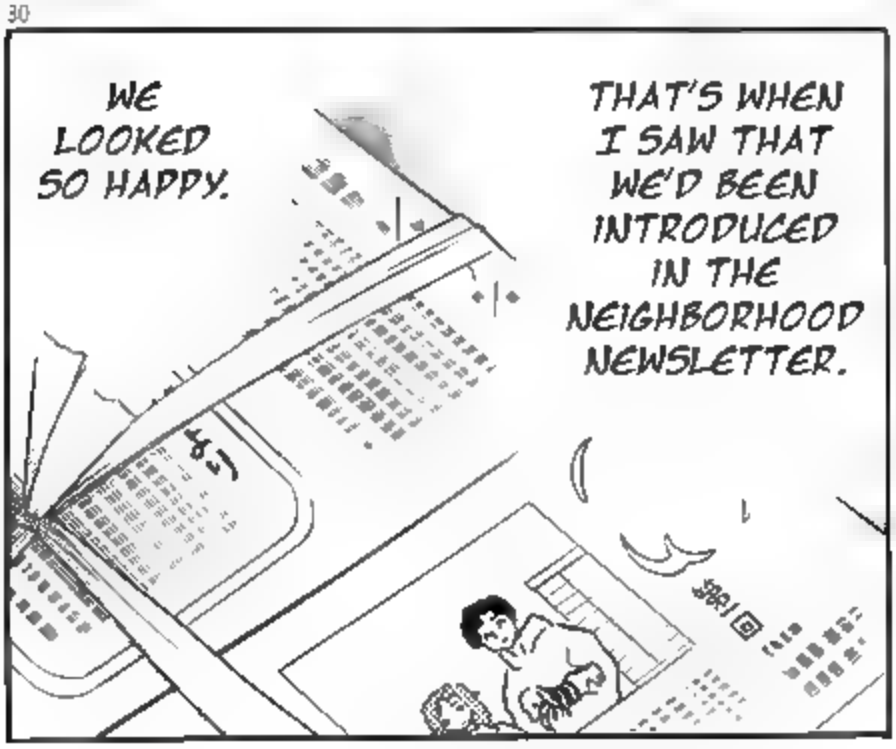
29

BU- BUT HOW COULD YOU...
YOU LITTLE ...
OTORO-SAN...

AND SO OTORO-SAN CONFESSED IT ALL.



30



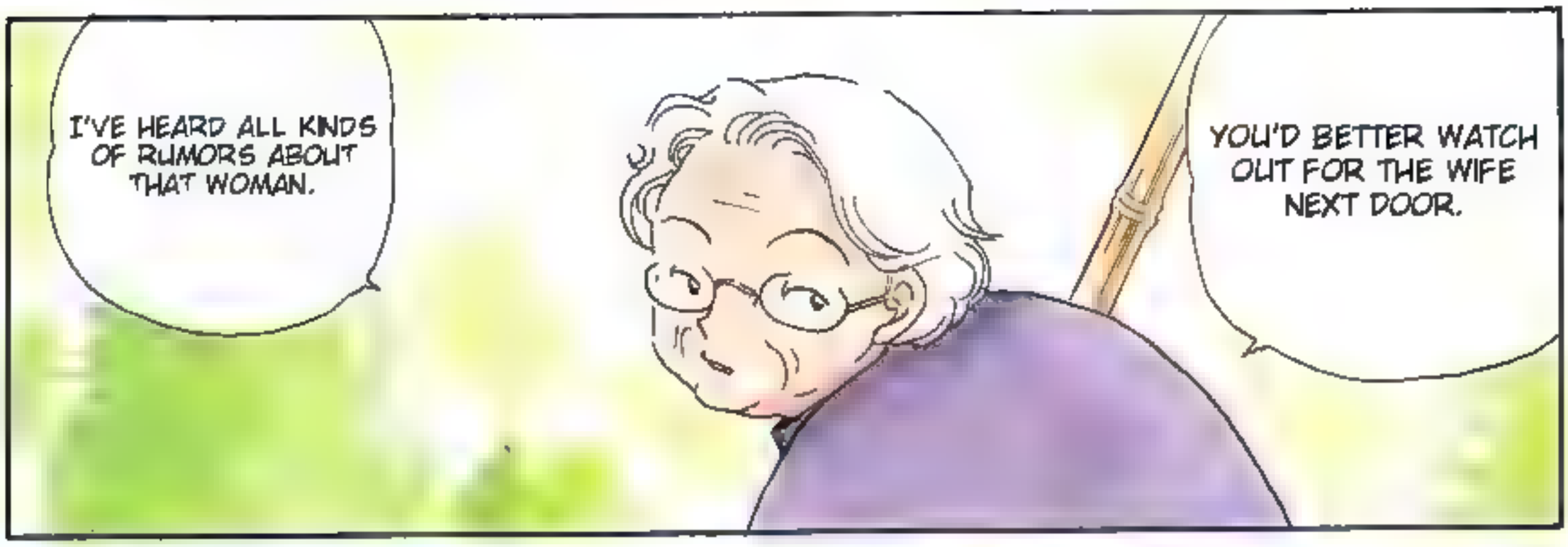
MY HUSBAND HAD BEEN LYING ABOUT GOING ON BUSINESS TRIPS...
BUT THE TRUTH WAS,
HE'D SPEND THE NIGHT WITH ANOTHER WOMAN... AND I KNEW ABOUT IT.
ON EVERY FRIDAY,
IF MY HUSBAND FOUND OUT I'D STARTED I FIRE IN OUR NEW HOUSE,
AND SO YOU PRETENDED YOU SAW AN ARSONIST.
THE WHOLE BUNDLE I WAS RECYCLING CAUGHT ON FIRE...
BUT...
SO I SUDDENLY FELT THE URGE TO TEAR UP AND BURN THE NEWSLETTER.
WHOOSH
AND THEN, I GOT THE IDEA THAT IF THE FIRES KEPT HAPPENING EVERY FRIDAY, MAYBE MY HUSBAND WOULD STOP SPENDING NIGHTS AT THAT WOMAN'S PLACE...
HE WOULD HAVE BEEN ANGRY WITH ME.

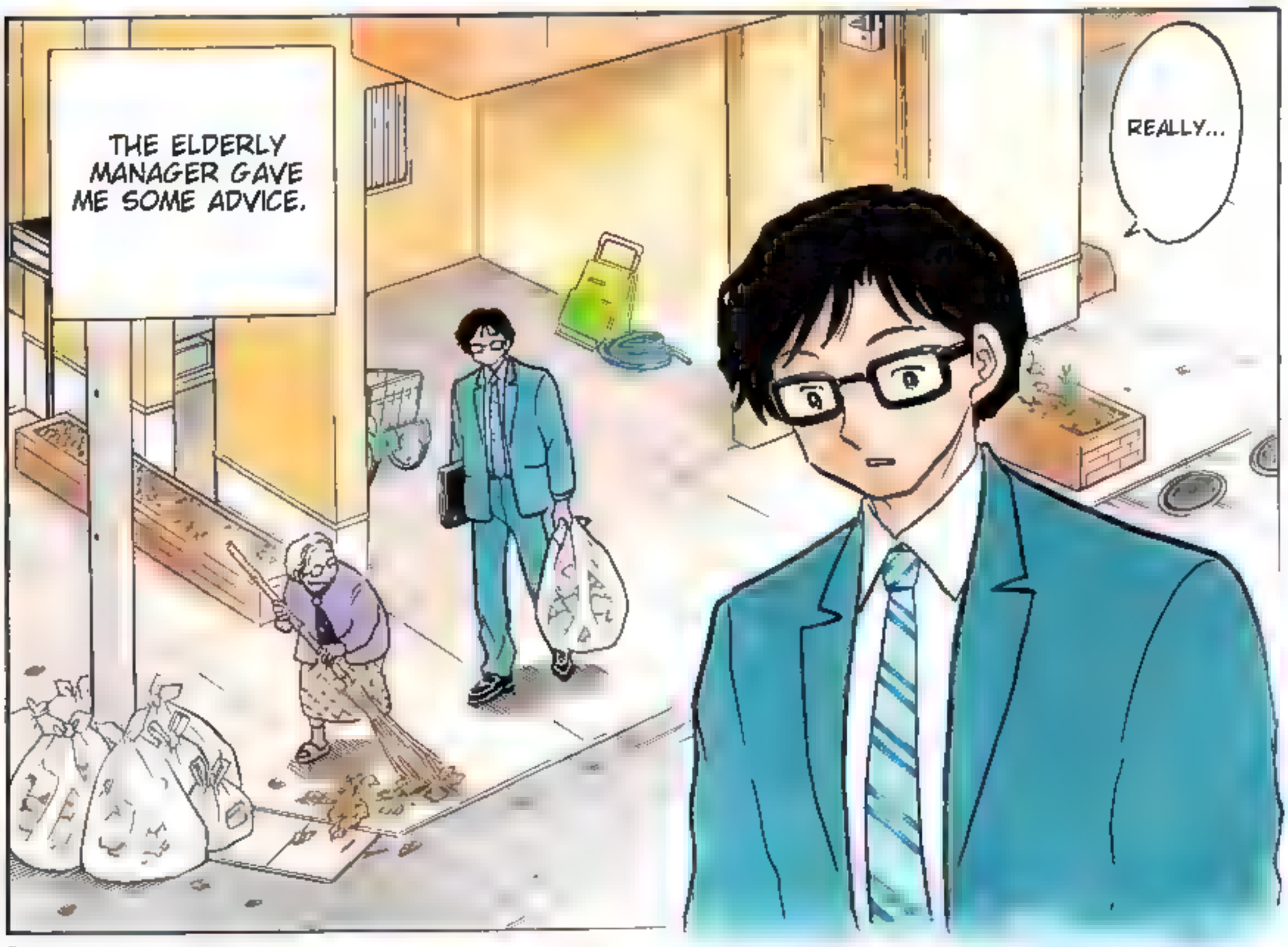
WELL,
BUT THEN WHY WERE YOU ONLY TARGETING THE FAMILIES IN THE NEWS-LETTER...?
OTORO-SAN WAS ARRESTED.
I BECAME BITTER ON THE INSIDE.
WHEN I SAW HOW HAPPY THEY ALL LOOKED,
SO YOU SAY YOUR HUSBAND GOT A PART-TIME JOB?
NOT LIKE SHIMODA-SAN.
OTORO-SAN WAS JUST WEAK, I GUESS.
SHOULD I STOP DISTRIBUTING THE NEWSLETTERS?
I GIVE UP.
OH, CHEER UP, PRESIDENT.

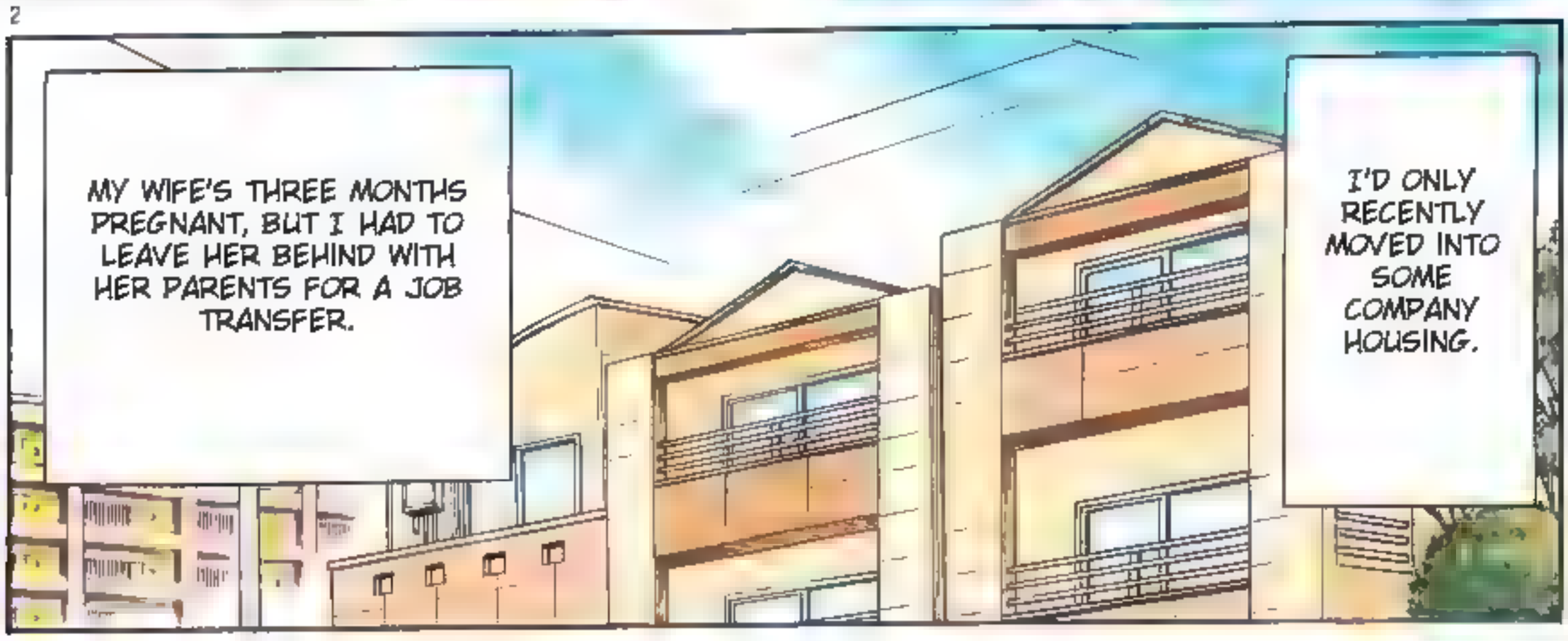
32

AND WITH THAT, OUR NIGHTTIME PATROL GROUP DISSOLVED.

TROUBLE WITH THE NEIGHBORS


I'VE HEARD ALL KINDS OF RUMORS ABOUT THAT WOMAN.
YOU'D BETTER WATCH OUT FOR THE WIFE NEXT DOOR.


THE ELDERLY MANAGER GAVE ME SOME ADVICE.
REALLY...


MY WIFE'S THREE MONTHS PREGNANT, BUT I HAD TO LEAVE HER BEHIND WITH HER PARENTS FOR A JOB TRANSFER.
I'D ONLY RECENTLY MOVED INTO SOME COMPANY HOUSING.

YOU REALLY SHOULD BE CAREFUL.

HO HO HO

IT MUST BE LONELY.

HAZAMA-SAN, YOU HAD TO TRANSFER HERE ALONE BECAUSE OF YOUR JOB, RIGHT?

SO... WHAT ARE THESE RUMORS?

NO, IF ANYTHING,

THE TRUTH IS I'M NOT LONELY.

OH.

3

LET'S GO OUT FOR ANOTHER DRINK TONIGHT!

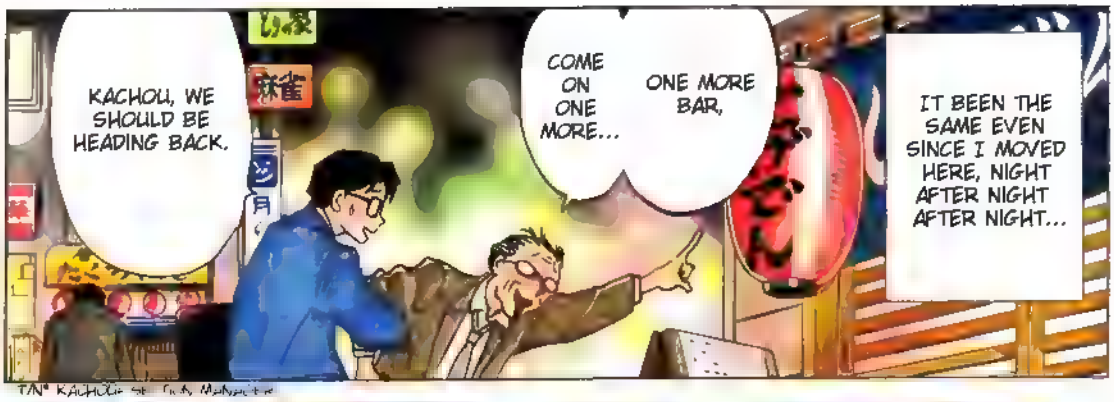
HAZAMA-KUN,

THE OLD GUY WHO LIVES IN THE COMPANY HOUSE NEXT DOOR, MR. UKITA.

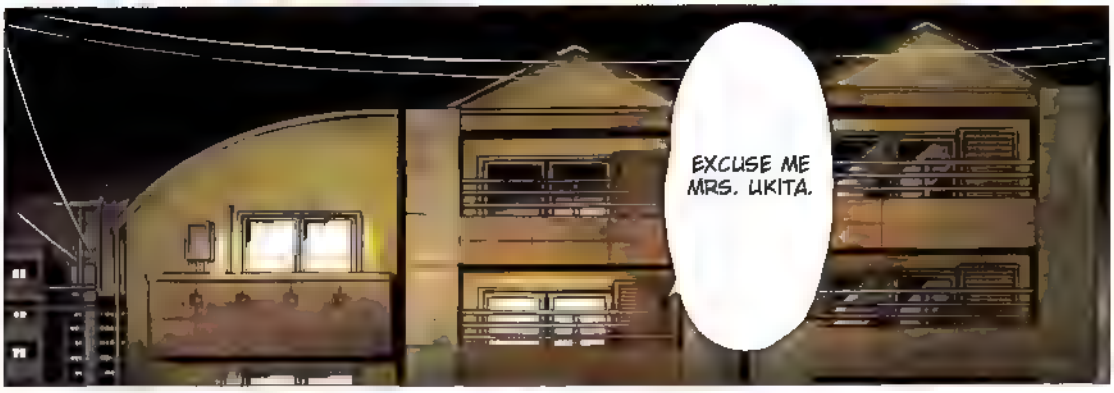
HE'S MY BOSS...

I REALLY WANT TO BE LEFT ALONE.

THE REASON FOR THAT IS...


KACHOU, WE SHOULD BE HEADING BACK.
COME ON ONE MORE...
ONE MORE BAR,
IT BEEN THE SAME EVEN SINCE I MOVED HERE, NIGHT AFTER NIGHT AFTER NIGHT...

T/N* KACHOU = [illegible]


EXCUSE ME MRS. UKITA.

4

(THIS IS THE WIFE THE RUMORS ARE ABOUT...)
I'M SORRY HAZAMA-SAN.
UGH, NIGHT AFTER NIGHT AFTER NIGHT.

NO... TRUTH BE TOLD, SHE'S WHAT OUR SOCIETY WOULD CONSIDER A VERY BEAUTIFUL WIFE.

HEY HASZHAMA-KUN~ LESSH GO DRINKING CHUMORROW~.

SHE'S AN EXCEPTIONALLY ORDINARY WOMAN.

TRY TO WALK PROPERLY, DEAR.

BUT IT'S LIKE UKITA-KACHOU DOESN'T WANT TO GO HOME.

I'M NOT SURE.

NO, MY BOSS DRAGGED ME OUT AGAIN TONIGHT...

OF COURSE I'M NOT MAKING IT UP.

IT WAS MY LOVING NEW WIFE.

AH, YUKARIN?

YEAH, I JUST GOT HOME.

•BZZ

•BZZ

•BZZ..

HUH!?

YEAH, I'M JUST GOING TO WORK NOW. I LOVE YOU YUKARIN.

MY BOSS DRAGGED ME OUT AGAIN LAST NIGHT.

BYE BYE.

I'VE BEEN HERE FOR HALF A MONTH OR SO.

UKITA MARIKO...? THIS MUST BE ABOUT KACHOU'S WIFE.

UKIDA MARIKO IS AROUND.

UKITA MARIKO IS...

WHAT'S THIS?

6

IS THIS A SMEAR CAMPAIGN!?

THIS LETTER...

HUH...

UKITA MARIKO IS SLEEPING AROUND.

BUT THOSE RUMORS YOU MENTIONED ABOUT THE HOUSEWIFE NEXT DOOR...

THIS IS A LITTLE AWKWARD TO ASK,

AH, GOOD MORNING HAZAMA-SAN.

EXCUSE ME MRS. MANAGER.

IS THIS ABOUT THE LETTER?

*SHIRE

AH...

THIS HAPPENED QUITE A WHILE AGO, YOU SEE.

JUST WHAT IS GOING ON...?

UMM...

THE LETTER.

HE LIVED IN THE COMPANY HOUSING NEXT DOOR, WHERE YOU'RE LIVING NOW.

THIS GUY...

UKITA RESIDENCE

HAZAMA RESIDENCE

ACK!

NOT ONLY THAT, BUT THE LOVER WORKED UNDER HER HUSBAND.

THAT WIFE WENT AND HAD AN AFFAIR.

THEN THE GUY MOVED AWAY AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP ENDED...

AT THAT TIME, SOMEONE HANDED OUT LETTERS TELLING EVERYONE WHAT HAPPENED.

PLEASE STOP RIGHT THERE.

WHAT!?

I WAS A LITTLE WORRIED.

THAT'S WHY WHEN YOU MOVED IN AND I SAW HOW YOUNG YOU ARE,

YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT I ALREADY HAVE A VERY PRETTY LITTLE WIFE.

LOOK HERE!

TA-DA!

HUH...

EH!? JUST WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT!?

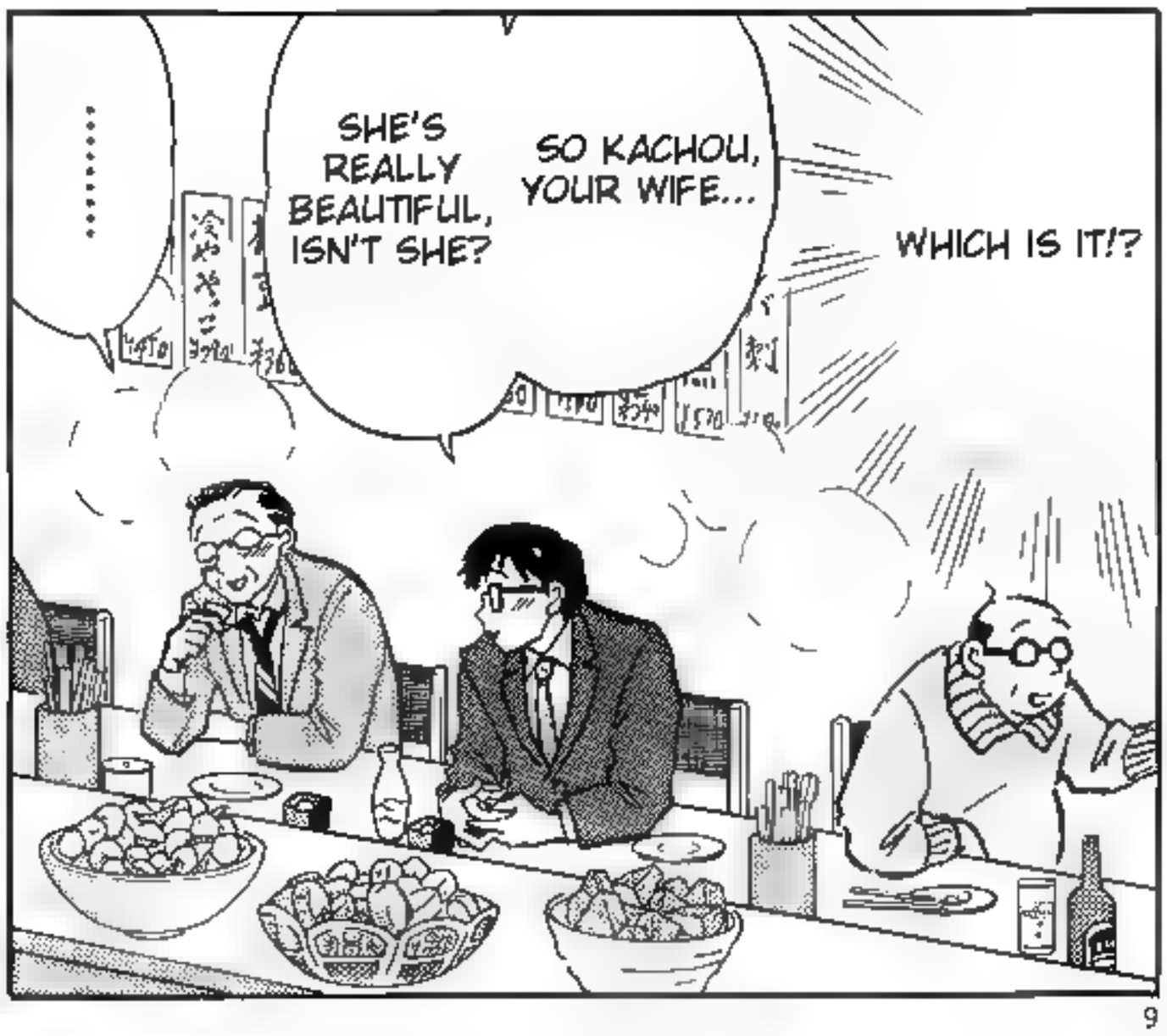
SO I WONDER WHEN IT'S GOING TO HAPPEN...

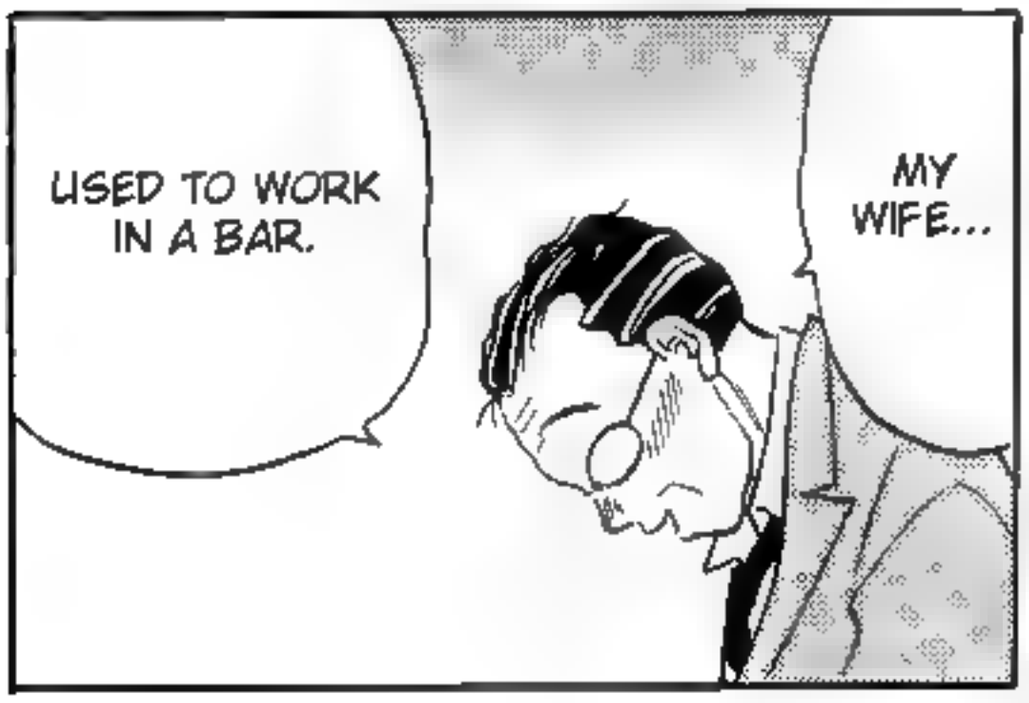
HMM...

MAYBE HE DOESN'T, AND THAT'S WHY HE CAN HAPPILY GO OUT BAR-HOPPING EVERY NIGHT...

OR COULD IT BE...

THAT HE KNOWS AND JUST DOESN'T WANT TO GO HOME...?





ON THE CONDITION THAT HER MOTHER WOULD LIVE WITH US,

AND SO,

THERE YOU GO AGAIN!

BUT I LIKE OLDER GUYS!

AND SHE HAD TO LOOK AFTER HER SICK MOTHER.

HER FATHER PASSED AWAY WHEN SHE WAS YOUNG,

SHE'S GOING TO LEAVE ME..

I GET THE FEELING THAT MAYBE...

UMM...

FINALLY PASSED AWAY.

AND JUST LAST YEAR, MY MOTHER-IN-LAW

もつ煮 ¥450

もろきゅう ¥280

I ASKED HER IF SHE'D MARRY ME...

HOW CAN SOMEONE NEGLECT SUCH A LOVING WIFE JUST TO GO OUT BAR HOPPING EVERY NIGHT?

I JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND.

SIGH...

UGH...

SHOULDN'T YOU BE BACK AT HOME?

IF YOU'RE THAT WORRIED ABOUT IT,

YOU MUST BE PRETTY LONELY AFTER MOVING BY YOURSELF.
ギロ
YOUR WIFE'S PREGNANT, ISN'T SHE?
HAZAMA-KUN,

FOR SOME REASON MY BOSS GOT TOTALLY TRASHED AFTER THAT.
OH...
HUH? THIS IS HER?
I REALLY WANT TO SEE HER...
IT IS QUITE LONELY.

OH, SORRY HAZAMA-SAN.

ピンポン
*DING DONG
EXCUSE ME, MRS. UKITA.

I'M SORRY TO ASK, BUT...

UMM, HAZAMA-SAN,

I WANNA MOVE BACK HOME...

"THUMP"

THANKS FOR DOING THIS.

THAT'S NO GOOD, HUH?

COME ON, YOU CAN'T JUST SLEEP THERE.

HEY,

ZZZZ

.....

YOU'VE REALLY BEEN A BIG HELP...

HMM.

OH.

YOU KNOW, WE STARTED SLEEPING SEPARATELY RECENTLY.

UMM,

SINCE AROUND THE TIME YOU MOVED IN NEXT DOOR.

YES,

UMM...

HE JUST STARTED SUDDENLY?

WITH THE HEAVY DRINKING...

I WONDER WHY HE'S SUDDENLY...

WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS!?

WHAT...?

SO MY BOSS KEEPS TAKING ME OUT NIGHT AFTER NIGHT...

TU-HEE

TU-HEE

TU-HEE

I WAS A LITTLE WORRIED.

HANG ON A SECOND.

I MOVED INTO HER LOVER'S APARTMENT...

WAIT, WAIT, SO THEN...

THEN MY BOSS DOES KNOW ABOUT THOSE RUMORS!?

IS HE JUST TRYING TO KEEP ME AWAY FROM HIS WIFE!?

MRS. UKITA.

AH, ERM...

YES?

THEN JUST WHO WROTE THAT LETTER FROM THIS MORNING!?

どどどど

MAYBE YOU KNOW WHO SENT THEM...?

IT'S THE SAME ONE.

IT HAD TO BE *THAT GUY*.

HER LOVER!?

AND THEN THAT GUY MOVED IN NEXT DOOR.

AFTER WE GOT MARRIED, MY HUSBAND AND I LIVED IN THESE COMPANY HOUSES FOR A FEW YEARS...

THAT GUY...?

HE KEPT TRYING TO DATE ME SO PERSISTENTLY THAT IT GOT ON MY NERVES.

THAT SLEAZEBAG WAS A REGULAR AT THE BAR I WORKED IN BEFORE I GOT MARRIED.

THEN HE STARTED CHASING ME BEHIND MY HUSBAND'S BACK...

IMAGINE MY SHOCK WHEN HE GOT ASSIGNED TO MY HUSBAND'S DEPARTMENT...

THEN HE MOVED AWAY.

THE SCUMBAG SPREAD ALL THOSE NASTY LETTERS AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD.

AND THEN...

OF COURSE I REJECTED HIM FLAT OUT.

TH- THEN WHAT HAPPENED?

16

THAT'S AWFUL...

AS IF I WOULD EVER HAVE AN AFFAIR WITH HIM, LIKE IT SAYS IN THAT DISGUSTING LETTER...

SNEAKING

.....

SO BACK THEN, YOUR HUSBAND...

HE SAID HE BELIEVED ME...

OR, WELL, THAT'S WHAT HE TOLD ME ANYWAY.

WELL, GOOD-NIGHT...

NIGHT.

WHEN I WOKE UP NEXT DAY...

WHAT THE HECK!?

EH...

MORE OF THESE SLEAZY THING ARE STILL BEING HANDED OUT!

HE LEFT FOR WORK EARLY THIS MORNING.

WHERE'S YOUR HUSBAND...?

HAZAMA-SAN, ABOUT LAST NIGHT...

AH.

MRS. UKITA.

*FREEZES

BY THE WAY...

EH...!?

THESE AWFUL THINGS WERE HANDED OUT AGAIN!

UMM, LET'S MOVE FIRST.

こそこそ

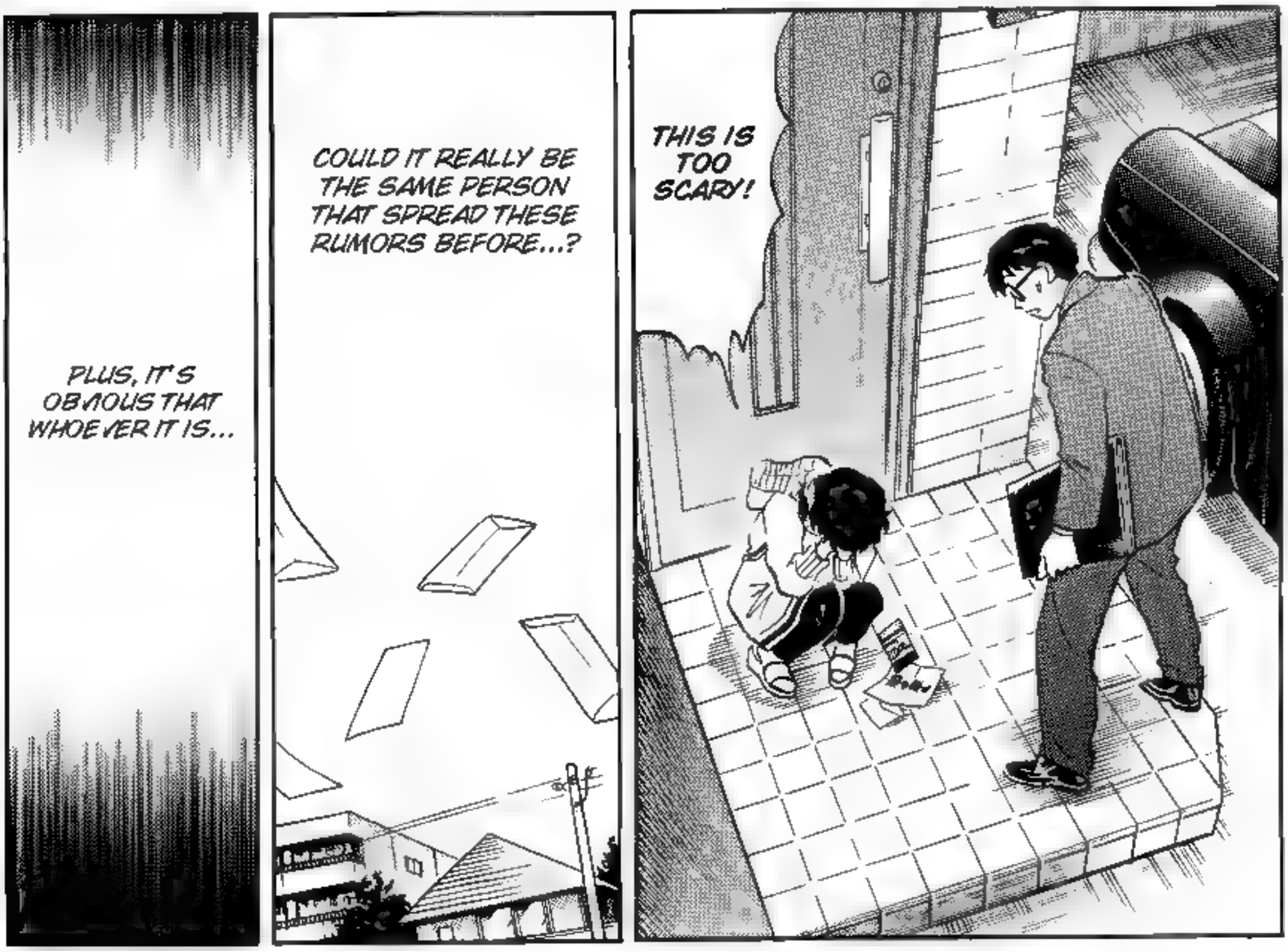
SFX: WHISPERING

じろじろじろ

SFX: STARING

*OPENING

ぶる ぶる ぶる
BURU BURU BURU
UNFOR-GIVABLE...?
許せない
UNFORGIVABLE.
THIS PHOTO WAS TAKEN LAST NIGHT.
THE PERP HAD TO BE NEARBY...


PLUS, IT'S OBVIOUS THAT WHOEVER IT IS...
COULD IT REALLY BE THE SAME PERSON THAT SPREAD THESE RUMORS BEFORE...?
THIS IS TOO SCARY!

I'LL PUT A STOP TO THIS.

IF THIS GETS SPREAD AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD OR AT THE OFFICE...

THINKS I'M HAVING AN AFFAIR WITH MY BOSS'S WIFE!

MAYBE I CAN FIND HIM USING THE EMPLOYEE REGISTER.

SHE SAID HE WORKED IN THIS DEPARTMENT A FEW YEARS AGO.

THIS IS FREAKING MRS. UKITA OUT, TOO...

I'D LIKE TO HAVE A FACE TO FACE CHAT WITH HIM.

HE QUIT THE COMPANY TOO.

AFTER THE INCIDENT WITH THE LETTERS...

HUH!?

CLICK

SEE YOU, HAZAMA-KUN.

YEAH, I GUESS I SHOULD TODAY.

SEE YOU TOMORROW.

AH KACHOU, YOU'RE GOING HOME ALREADY?

WHAT AM I GONNA DO NOW...

DAMN...

YOU COULD SUE HIM FOR ABUSE OF PRIVILEGE.

YEAH, HE'S DRAGGED YOU OUT EVERY NIGHT.

HE ISN'T DRAGGING YOU OUT DRINKING AGAIN!

LUCKY YOU, HAZAMA-SAN!

AH HAZAMA-KUN, I DON'T SUPPOSE...

THAT'S WEIRD...

*BEEP

WE ARE UNABLE TO REACH THIS NUMBER. EITHER THE PHONE IS TURNED OFF, OR THIS CUSTOMER IS IN AN AREA WITHOUT RECEPTION...

HUH?

I GOT SO CAUGHT UP IN MY JOB AND THESE SLEAZY LETTERS THAT I FORGOT TO CALL MY WIFE!

AH, DAMMIT!

*BEEP

*BEEP

SHE'S PREGNANT, ISN'T SHE?

OH THAT'S RIGHT, YOU'RE NEWLYWEDS AREN'T YOU?

-YOU HAVE A PICTURE OF YOUR WIFE? I WANNA SEE HER!!

WHAT!? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT!?

DID SHE BLOAT UP AFTER SHE GOT PREGNANT...?

SO WAS SHE PRETTY WHEN YOU WERE DATING...?

OH...

HE CHANGED THE TIME HE WENT IN TO WORK.

AND EVEN IN THE MORNINGS...

GOOD MORNING!

FOR WHATEVER REASON, AFTER THAT DAY MY BOSS DIDN'T ASK ME TO GO DRINKING AGAIN.

HE SAID HE HAD TO GO TO WORK EARLY.

YES,

HAS HE GONE ALREADY?

EH!?

DID YOU FIND SOMETHING OUT!?

I THINK MAYBE IT'S NOT THE SAME PERSON AS BEFORE...

UMM... HAZAMA-SAN.

THE PERPETRATOR OF THE PHOTO AND LETTERS...

MY BOSS!?

WHY WOULD YOU THINK THAT!?

I THINK MAYBE... IT MIGHT BE MY HUSBAND...

WELL, EVER SINCE YOU MOVED IN NEXT DOOR HE'S BEEN ACTING REALLY STRANGE.

HE WON'T EVEN MAKE EYE CONTACT WITH ME WHEN WE TALK AT HOME!

HE'S BEEN DOUBTING ME ALL THIS TIME.

SO IN OTHER WORDS, HE'S CONVINCED THAT HIS WIFE REALLY DID HAVE AN AFFAIR.

I WAS JUST TALKING TO HIS WIFE AS I LEFT FOR WORK...

THAT'S RIGHT! IN THAT PHOTO...

MRS. MANAGER...

EH!?

THERE'S A RUMOR GOING AROUND THE NEIGHBOR-HOOD.

YOU TWO SHOULD BE CAREFUL.

...I GUESS SO.

HE MUST HAVE TAKEN THE PHOTO AND THEN SNEAKED BACK INSIDE.

24

COULD IT BE THAT SOMETHING HAS HAPPENED...?

BOTH OF YOU ARE TALKING CLOSELY LATELY.

I MEAN, WITH THAT SUITCASE...

AH KACHOU, ARE YOU GOING ON A BUSINESS TRIP?

WELL...

SO WE REALLY WERE MISUNDERSTOOD.

IT'S JUST A TERRIBLE MISUNDER-STANDING.

HUH!? BUT THAT'S...

I WON'T BE BACK UNTIL TOMORROW NIGHT.

I'M OFF TO HOKKAIDO.

IT HAPPENED THE FOLLOWING MORNING.

HAZAMA-KUN,

HAZAMA-KUN!

DING DONG

DING DONG

WAS IT THAT IMPORTANT?

WHY'D HE REPEAT HIMSELF?

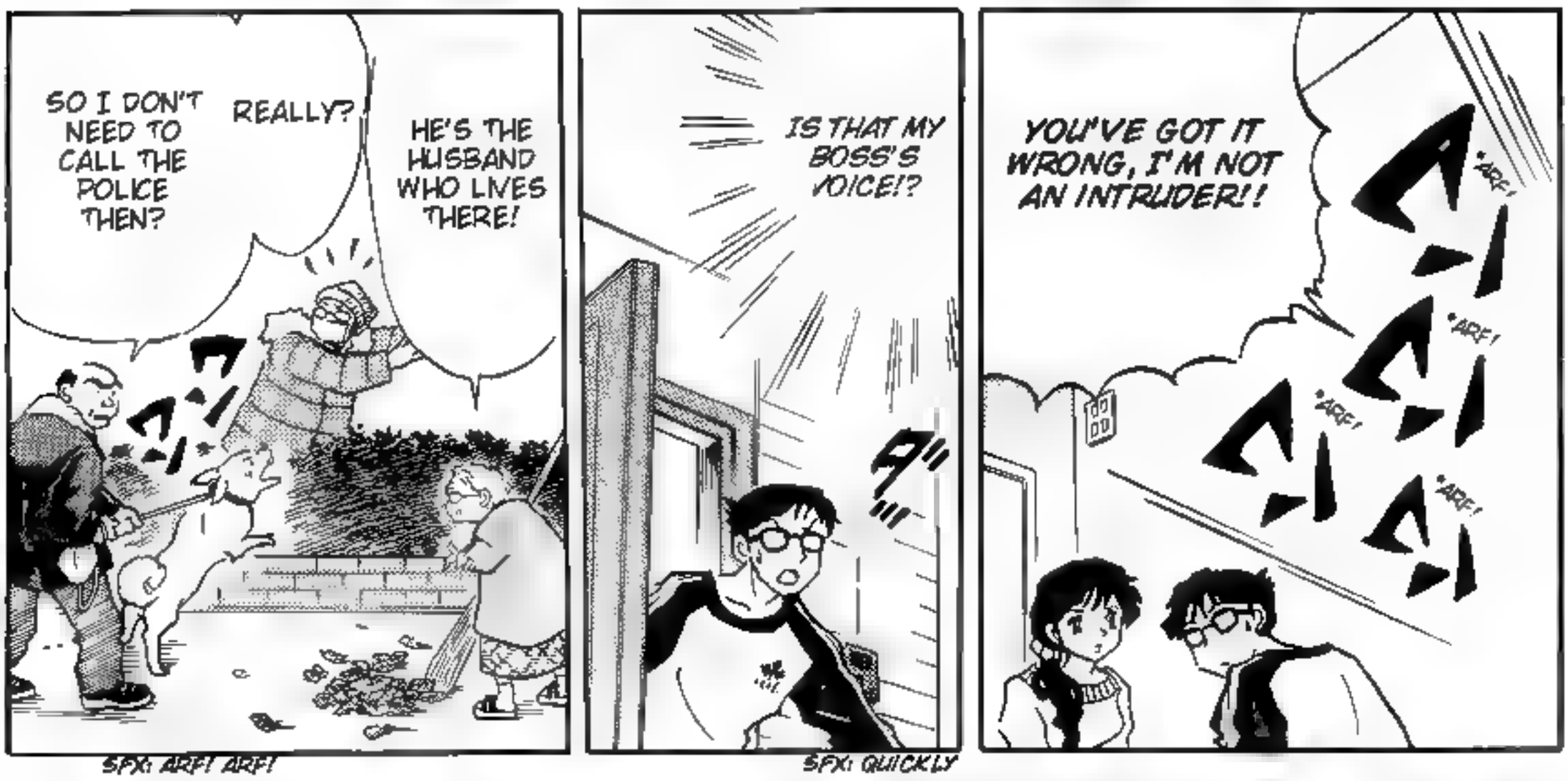
.....

SEE YOU!

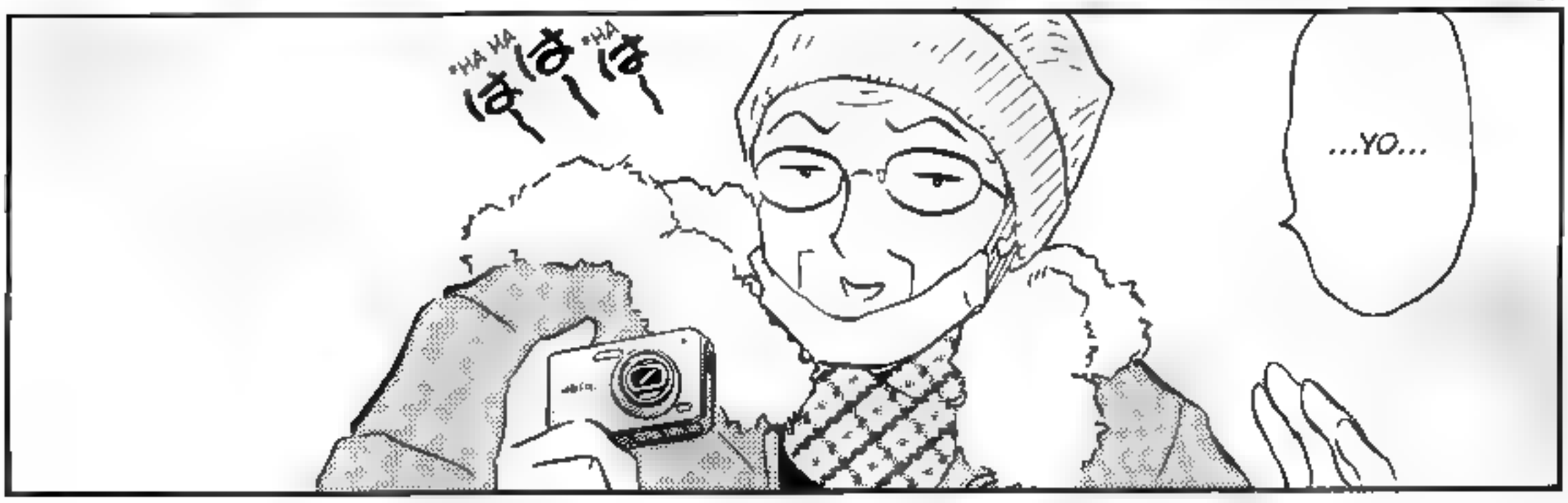
WELL, I'LL BE AWAY UNTIL SATURDAY NIGHT.

PLEASE, COME TO MY HOUSE...
MRS. UKITA?
UGH...
THIS IS...
SFX: WHOOSH
I WAS CLEANING MY HUSBAND'S ROOM WHEN...
I KNOCKED OVER A BAG. THESE WERE INSIDE IT...
THESE WERE... ALL TAKEN WITHIN THE LAST WEEK...
AND SO WAS...
THIS LETTER...
26
"I'LL ALLOW IT NOW."
今なら許す。

IT'S ANOTHER OF THOSE SCANDALOUS LETTERS...
THIS IS...
今なら新


SO I DON'T NEED TO CALL THE POLICE THEN?
REALLY?
HE'S THE HUSBAND WHO LIVES THERE!
SFX: ARF! ARF!
IS THAT MY BOSS'S VOICE!?
SFX: QUICKLY
YOU'VE GOT IT WRONG, I'M NOT AN INTRUDER!!
*ARF!
*ARF!
*ARF!
*ARF!

YOU'RE SAID YOU WERE GOING ON A BUSINESS TRIP...
DEAR,
KACHOU...!?


*HA HA HA
...YO...

AH...

YOU WROTE THEM ALL, DIDN'T YOU!?

THOSE LETTERS,

PLEASE EXPLAIN YOURSELF, KACHOU!

SFX: SLAM

I WAS GOING TO SEND THAT ONE, BUT... I DIDN'T.

THEN WHAT ABOUT THIS ONE...?

28

THAT'S BE-CAUSE...

BUT WHY?

DEAR, YOU LIED ABOUT GOING TO WORK EARLY SO YOU COULD SPY ON US, DIDN'T YOU?

ABSOLUTELY WRONG!

YOU'RE WRONG!

隣家の悩み

HE WAS LISTENING IN ON US THAT NIGHT...?

WHAT...!?

WELL, I KNEW YOU WERE FRIGHTENED BY ALL THOSE NASTY LETTERS...

SO I HIRED A DETECTIVE AGENCY TO TRACK HIM DOWN.

I COULDN'T SHAKE MY DOUBTS EVER SINCE THAT GUY WROTE THE ORIGINAL LETTERS,

THEY'VE BEEN HANGING AROUND OUR NEIGHBORHOOD TRYING TO CATCH HIM IN THE ACT.

29

THAT GUY...

THE DETECTIVE AGENCY CALLED ME UP YESTERDAY.

THE LETTERS WERE WRITTEN BY THAT OTHER GUY...?

SO THEN...

THAT IT WOUND ME UP LIKE A CHEAP WATCH.

AND THEN EVERY MORNING I SAW YOU TALKING SO INTIMATELY WITH HAZAMA-KUN...

*SNAP

BUT THEN... WHO'S BEEN DELIVERING THESE LETTERS...?

SO HE'S NOT IN JAPAN ANYMORE.

TURNS OUT THAT HE'S IN SOUTH EAST ASIA SELLING PRESSURE COOKERS.

IT WAS ME.

B- BUT WHY!?

AT LEAST I WROTE ONE OF THEM.

I MEAN...
THAT YOU STILL HAD DOUBTS ABOUT ME.
WHEN HAZAMA-SAN MOVED HERE, IT WAS OBVIOUS FROM THE WAY YOU ACTED
IT WAS INFURIATING...
YOU REALLY DIDN'T.
EVEN THOUGH YOU TOLD ME YOU BELIEVED ME BACK THEN,
ONLY OLDER GUYS LIKE YOU DO IT FOR ME.
DIDN'T I ALWAYS TELL YOU BEFORE WE WERE MARRIED?
DEAR.
MARIKO.
HOLD ON.
EH?
AND SO THE CASE OF THE SCANDALOUS LETTERS CAME TO A CLOSE.
MA- MARIKO.
•SNIFF

JUST WHO THE HECK...!?

YOU MEAN IT WASN'T YOU?

I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT IT.

THEN WHO SENT THE SECOND LETTER...?

I TOOK AND SENT THOSE PICTURES.

YOUR WIFE CAME TO VISIT.

THAT WAS ME.

Doughnut

32

MY LOVING WIFE!

YUKARIN!

SO THAT NIGHT I DROVE ALL THE WAY HERE BY CAR...

BUT I WAS WORRIED THAT YOU WERE REALLY HAVING AN AFFAIR.

YOU SAID YOU WERE OUT DRINKING EVERY NIGHT WITH YOUR BOSS,

YUKARIN...

I TOOK A PHOTO WITH MY PHONE AND PRINTED SOME COPIES AT THE CONVENIENCE STORE...

IT GOT ME SO MAD.

YOU WERE COMING OUT OF HER HOUSE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT.

AND THAT'S WHEN I SAW YOU.

HOW REVOLTING.

I COULDN'T HELP IT~.

*POKE

NAUGHTY NAUGHTY! WHO'S BEEN A BAD WIDDLE GIRL~?

AND SO EVERYONE IN THE INCIDENT CAME CLEAN,

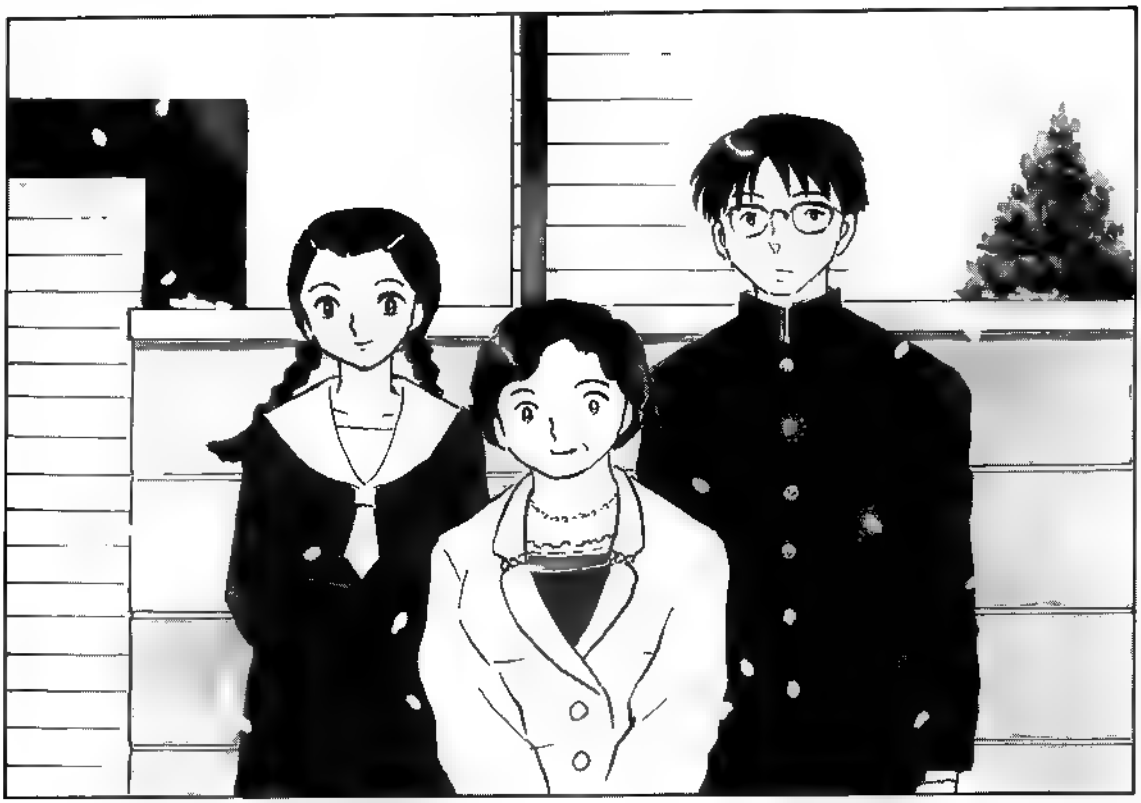
AND I COULD HAPPILY SPEND SOME TIME WITH MY LOVING WIFE WHOM I HADN'T SEEN IN AGES.

HUH, WHAT A WEIRDO.

SO IT SEEMS THE WIFE NEXT DOOR HAS A THING FOR OLDER GUYS.

ん

Scene of the Crime



1982, March – At our New Home

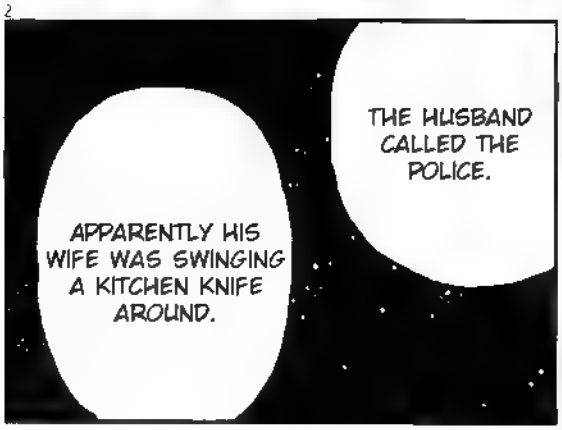
HUH. THAT'S THE ARASHI'S PLACE, ISN'T IT?
LOOKS LIKE THERE WAS A FIGHT.
SURVEILLANCE*
POLICE
警視庁

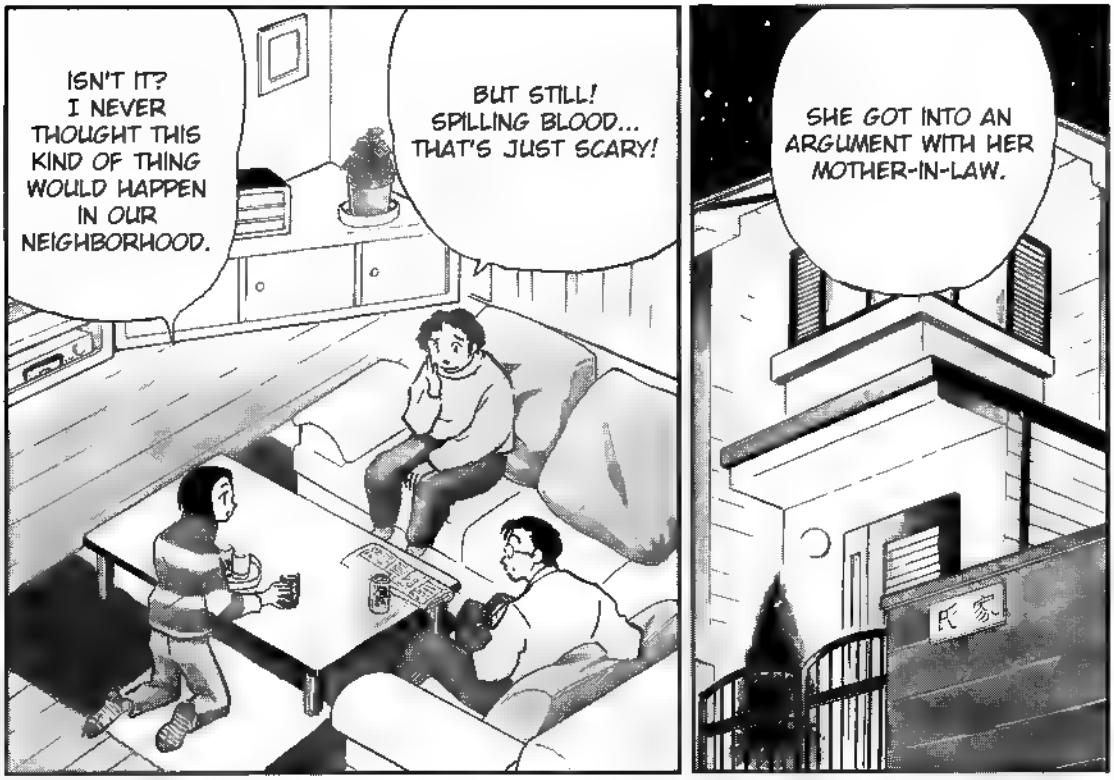
LOOKS LIKE THE POLICE ARE TAKING HER IN.
OH, ISN'T THAT THE YOUNG WIFE?
POLICE

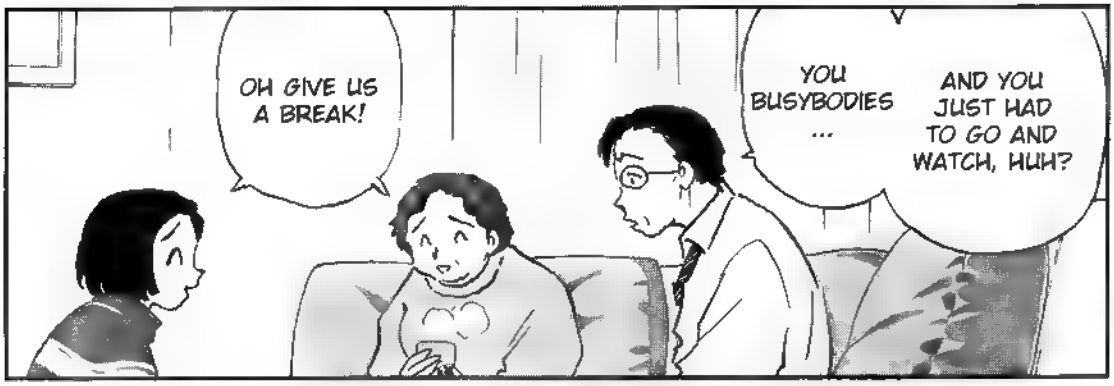
WELCOME BACK, DARLING.
OH, AKIHIKO!
AH... MOM, YOSHIKO.

HUH?

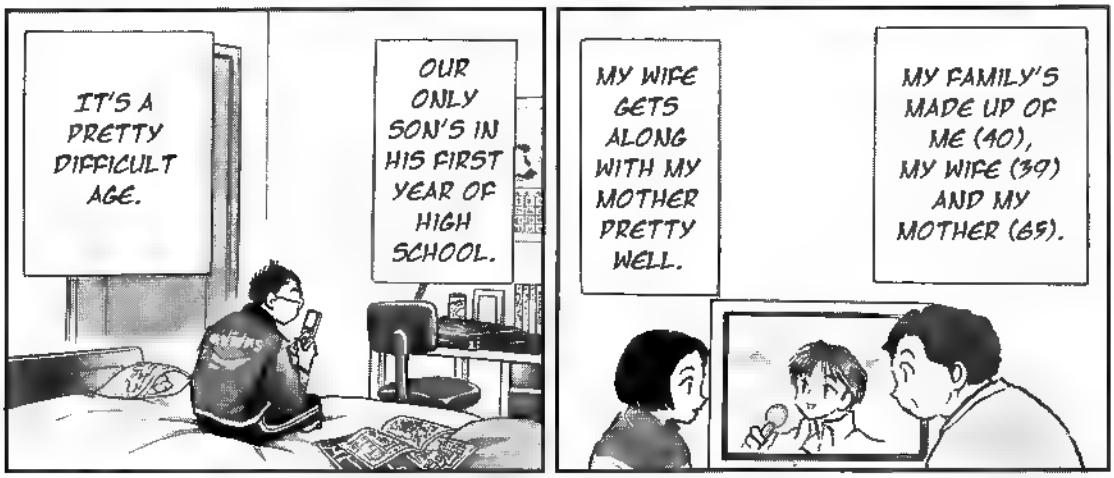
2

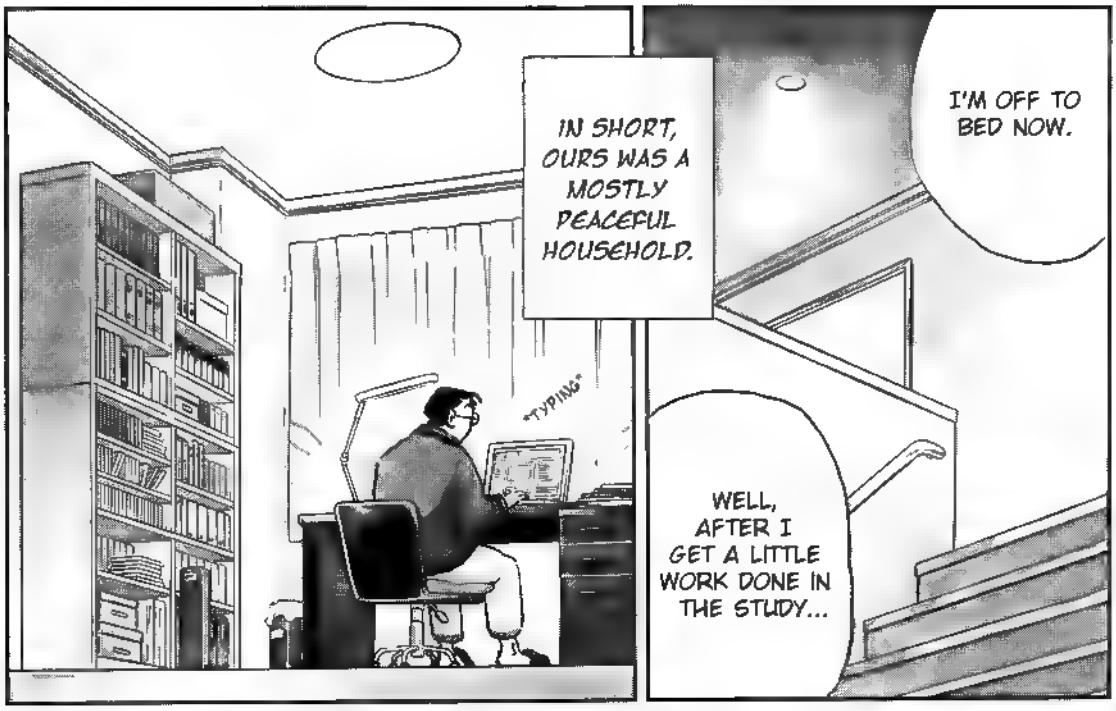

THE HUSBAND CALLED THE POLICE.
APPARENTLY HIS WIFE WAS SWINGING A KITCHEN KNIFE AROUND.


ISN'T IT? I NEVER THOUGHT THIS KIND OF THING WOULD HAPPEN IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD.
BUT STILL! SPILLING BLOOD... THAT'S JUST SCARY!
SHE GOT INTO AN ARGUMENT WITH HER MOTHER-IN-LAW.
民家


OH GIVE US A BREAK!
YOU BUSYBODIES ...
AND YOU JUST HAD TO GO AND WATCH, HUH?

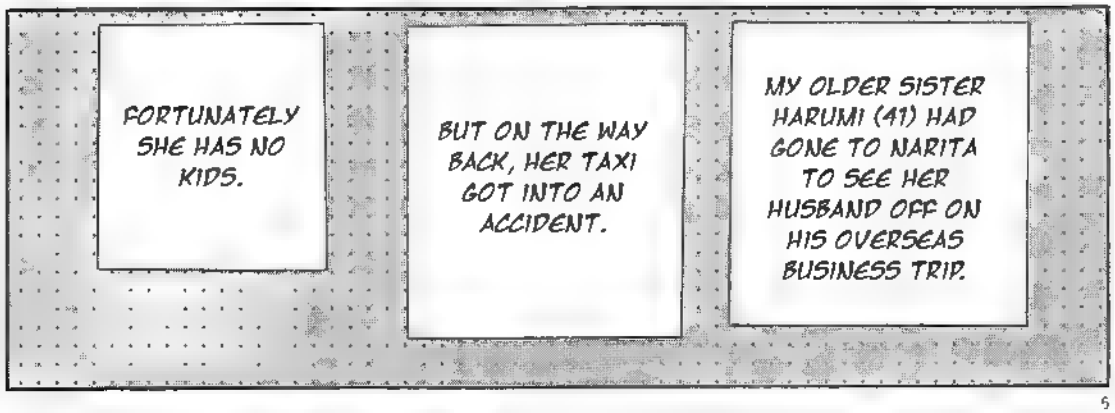
3


IT'S A PRETTY DIFFICULT AGE.
OUR ONLY SON'S IN HIS FIRST YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL.
MY WIFE GETS ALONG WITH MY MOTHER PRETTY WELL.
MY FAMILY'S MADE UP OF ME (40), MY WIFE (39) AND MY MOTHER (65).


IN SHORT, OURS WAS A MOSTLY PEACEFUL HOUSEHOLD.
"TYPING"
I'M OFF TO BED NOW.
WELL, AFTER I GET A LITTLE WORK DONE IN THE STUDY...

AKIHIKO, MAMA, I'M HERE!
AT LEAST IT WAS UNTIL THAT DAY ...
OH, YOUR BIG SISTER.
KASUMI?

AH YOSHIKO-SAN, WOULD YOU MIND GETTING MY BAGS FROM THE CAB?
OH, IT'S FINE, REALLY.
AH, THAT MUST HAVE BEEN TOUGH, HARUMI.
WALKING


FORTUNATELY SHE HAS NO KIDS.
BUT ON THE WAY BACK, HER TAXI GOT INTO AN ACCIDENT.
MY OLDER SISTER HARUMI (41) HAD GONE TO NARITA TO SEE HER HUSBAND OFF ON HIS OVERSEAS BUSINESS TRIP.

5

NO, NO, IT'S FINE... I MEAN YOU'RE HURT, SO IT MAKES SENSE.

WELL... IF YOU SAY SO.
IT'LL BE FINE, RIGHT DARLING?

MAMA TOLD ME TO COME AND STAY HERE.
SHE SAID IT WAS TOUGH BEING ON HER OWN... LONELY TOO.
I DIDN'T ASK FOR AN EXPLAN-ATION...

SURE!
LET'S MAKE THE MOST OF THIS, YOSHIKO-SAN.
WE NEED TO STICK UP FOR ONE ANOTHER.
OF COURSE! WE'RE FAMILY AFTER ALL.

THIS IS MY STUDY, AFTER ALL...
NO, I'M THE ONE WHO'LL HAVE TO MAKE DO HERE.

IT'S A BIT NARROW, BUT I'LL MAKE DO.
I'LL ONLY BE HERE A SHORT TIME.
MY STUDY'S THE ONLY ROOM WE HAVE FREE FOR YOU TO STAY IN...

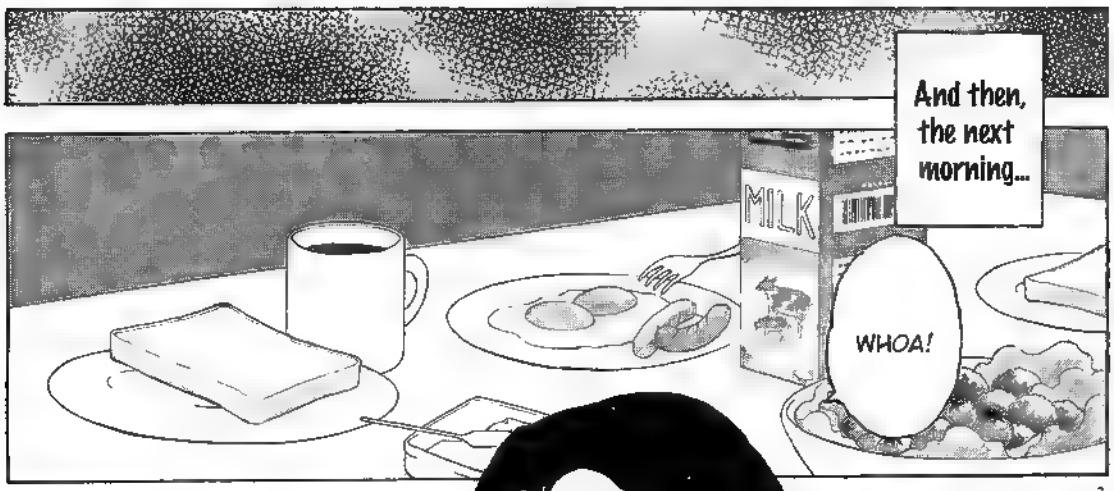
YOU CAN SET IT UP DOWN HERE.
HERE'S A FUTON, HARUMI-SAN.

6

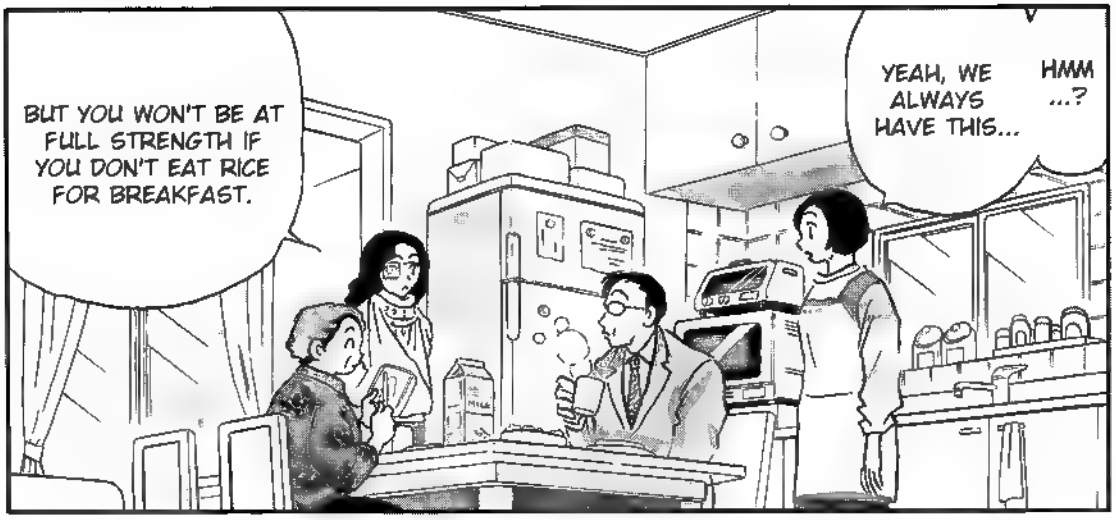
WELL I GUESS THERE'S NOTHING ELSE WE CAN DO IF SHE'S HURT.
MY SISTER'S ALWAYS BEEN SO SELFISH, EVER SINCE WAY BACK.
GOOD GRIEF, I GIVE UP.

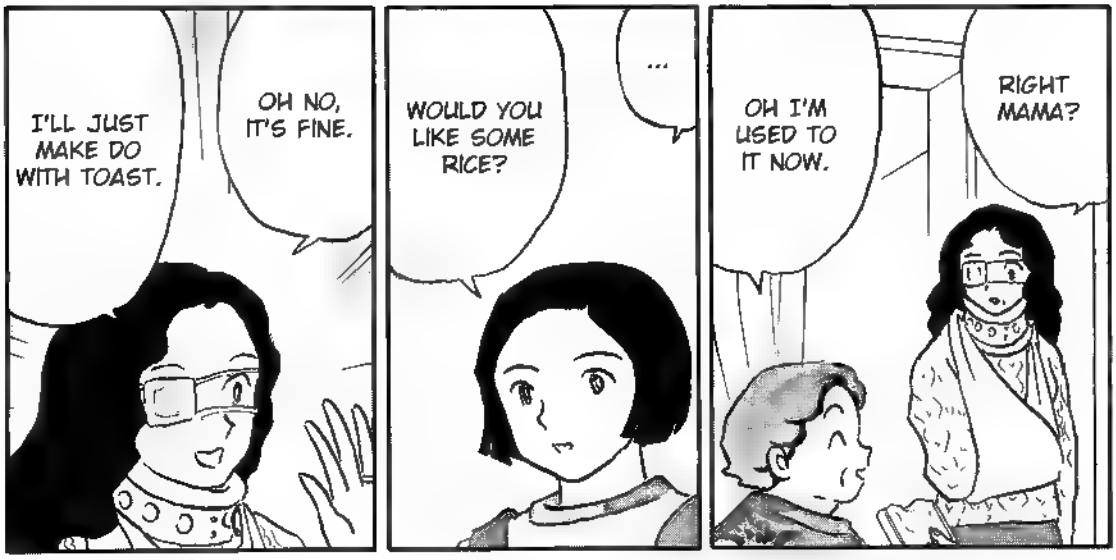
IT WOULD'VE BEEN NICE IF YOU'D TOLD ME SHE WAS COMING IN ADVANCE...
ALTHOUGH ...

OH...
IT'S NOT LIKE I HEARD ABOUT IT BEFORE YOU DID.
I WISH I COULD'VE.

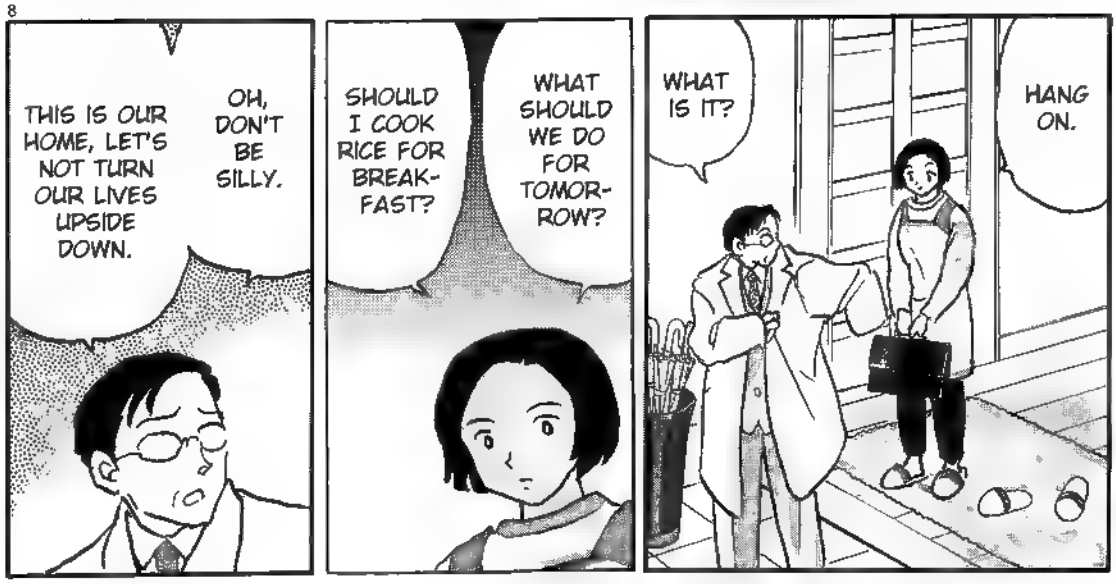

And then, the next morning...
MILK
WHOA!

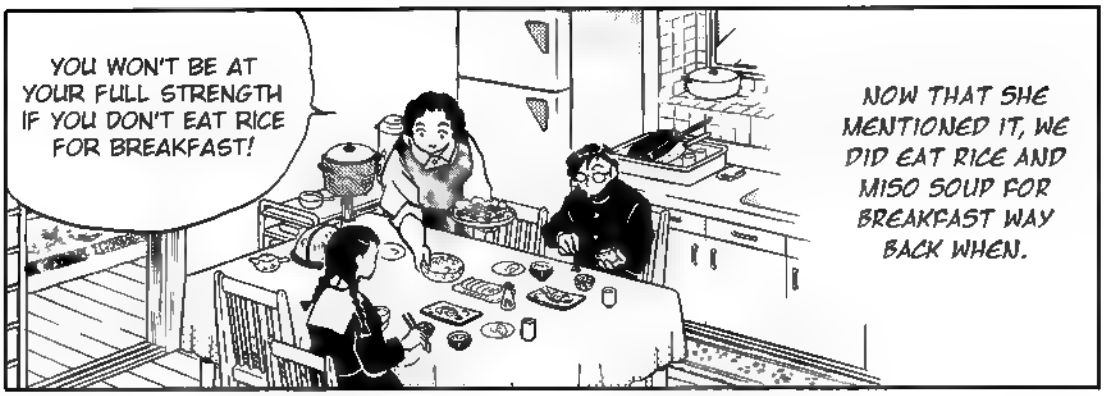
Came the breakfast incident.
YOU'RE EATING TOAST FOR BREAKFAST?


BUT YOU WON'T BE AT FULL STRENGTH IF YOU DON'T EAT RICE FOR BREAKFAST.
YEAH, WE ALWAYS HAVE THIS...
HMM ...?

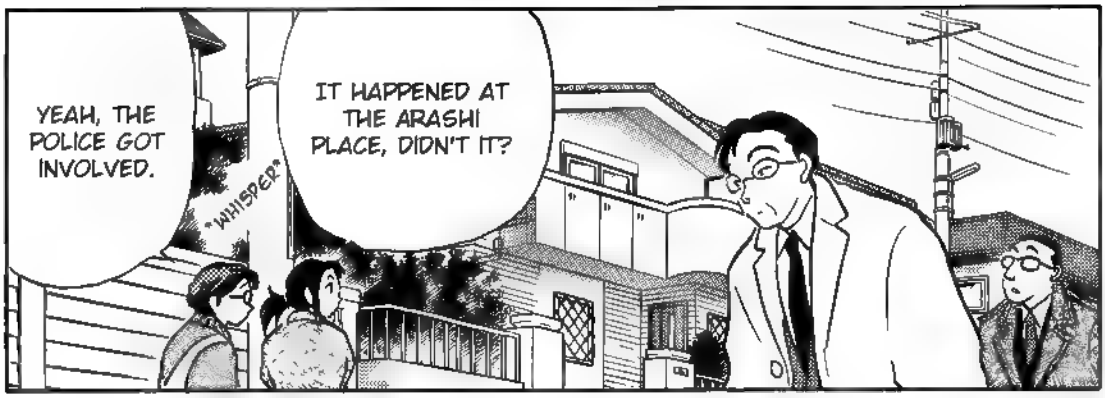

I'LL JUST MAKE DO WITH TOAST.
OH NO, IT'S FINE.
WOULD YOU LIKE SOME RICE?
...
OH I'M USED TO IT NOW.
RIGHT MAMA?

8


THIS IS OUR HOME, LET'S NOT TURN OUR LIVES UPSIDE DOWN.
OH, DON'T BE SILLY.
SHOULD I COOK RICE FOR BREAK-FAST?
WHAT SHOULD WE DO FOR TOMOR-ROW?
WHAT IS IT?
HANG ON.

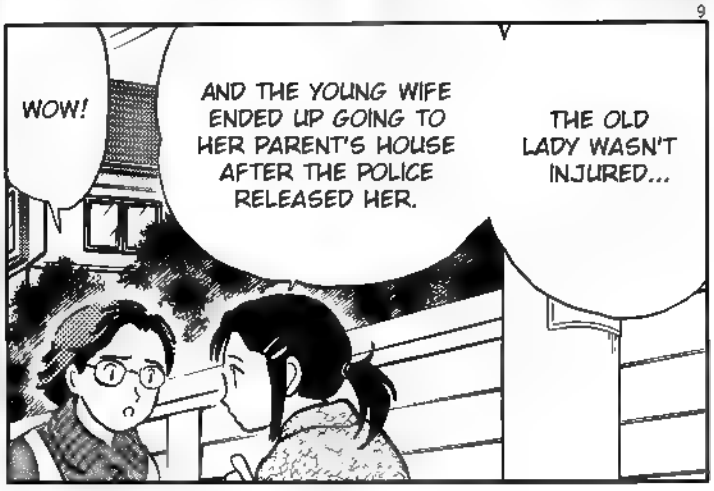

YOU WON'T BE AT YOUR FULL STRENGTH IF YOU DON'T EAT RICE FOR BREAKFAST!
NOW THAT SHE MENTIONED IT, WE DID EAT RICE AND MISO SOUP FOR BREAKFAST WAY BACK WHEN.

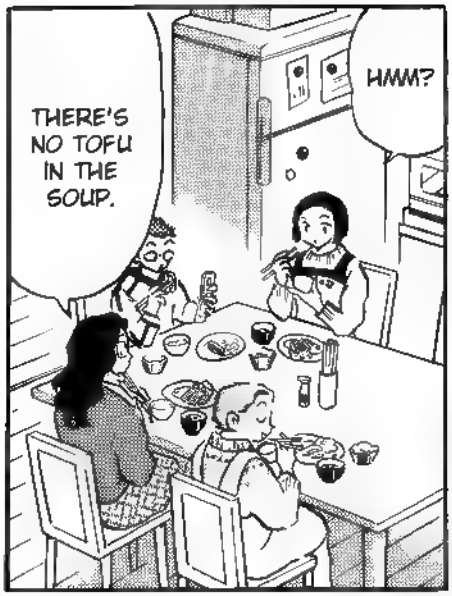
BACK THEN, MOM READILY GAVE UP ON BEING IN CHARGE OF THE KITCHEN.
IT'S FINE WHICHEVER WAY YOU LIKE IT, YOSHIKO-SAN.
NO, I'M GOOD.
AFTER WE GOT MARRIED, WE DECIDED TO MOVE IN WITH MY MOTHER.


YEAH, THE POLICE GOT INVOLVED.
"WHISPER"
IT HAPPENED AT THE ARASHI PLACE, DIDN'T IT?

9

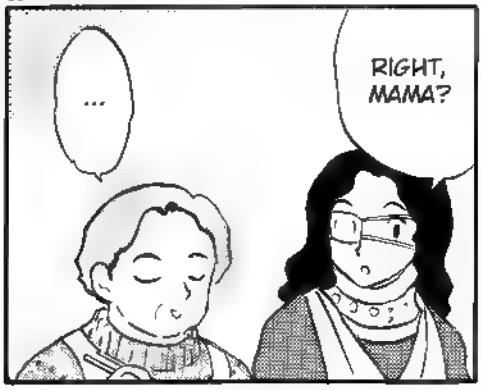
WELL, I SUPPOSE THAT'S ONLY NATURAL.
HMM...

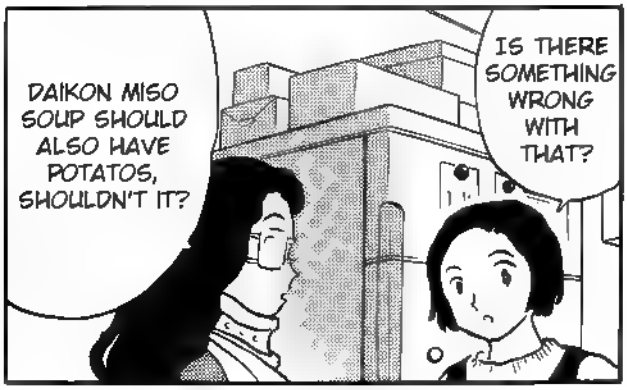

WOW!
AND THE YOUNG WIFE ENDED UP GOING TO HER PARENT'S HOUSE AFTER THE POLICE RELEASED HER.
THE OLD LADY WASN'T INJURED...

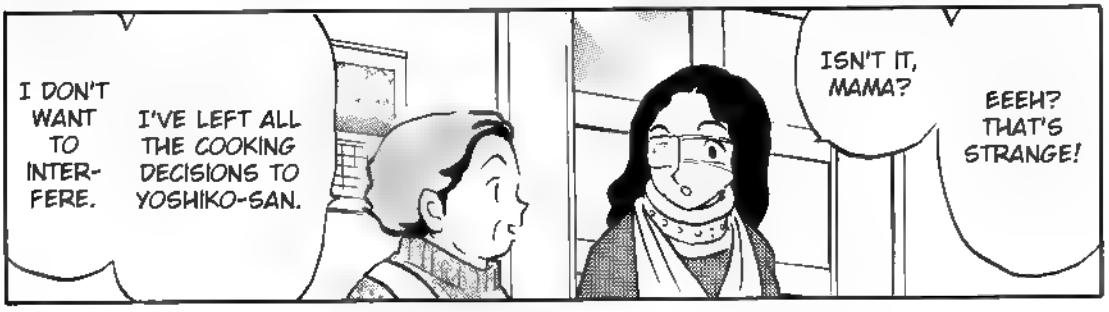


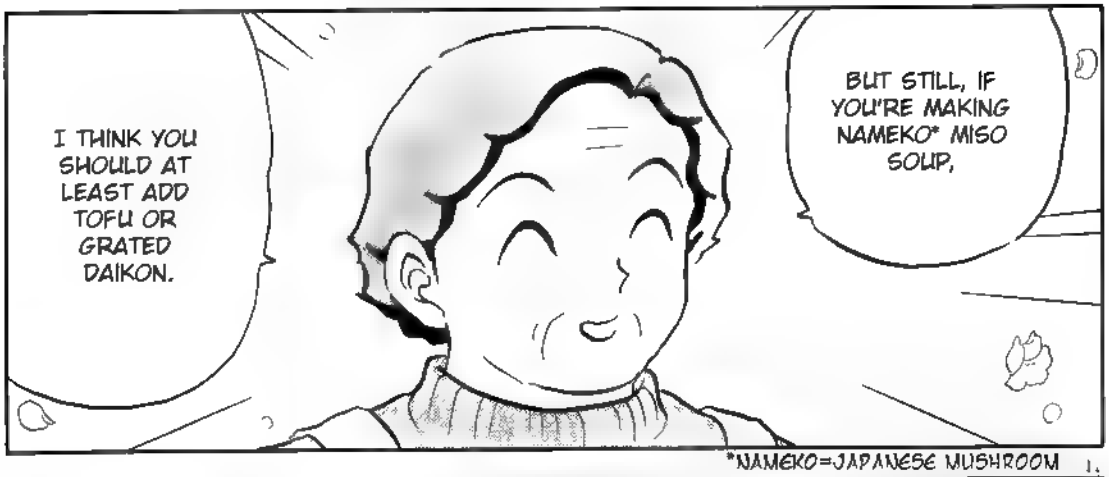
*WAKAME = BROWN SEAWEED

10





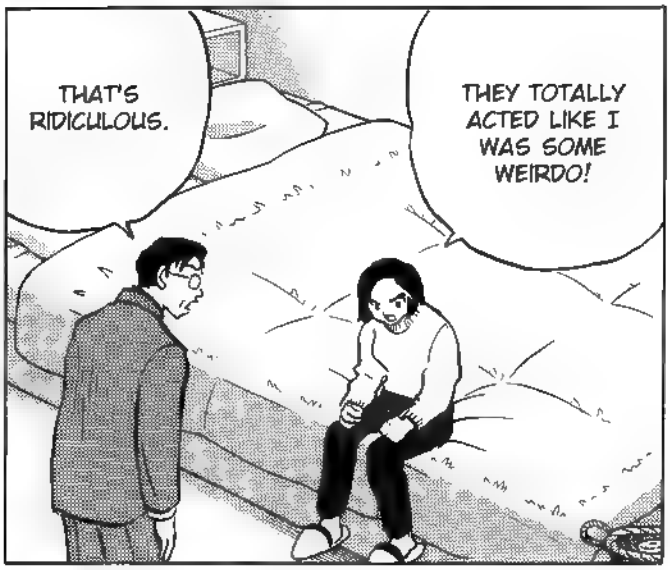




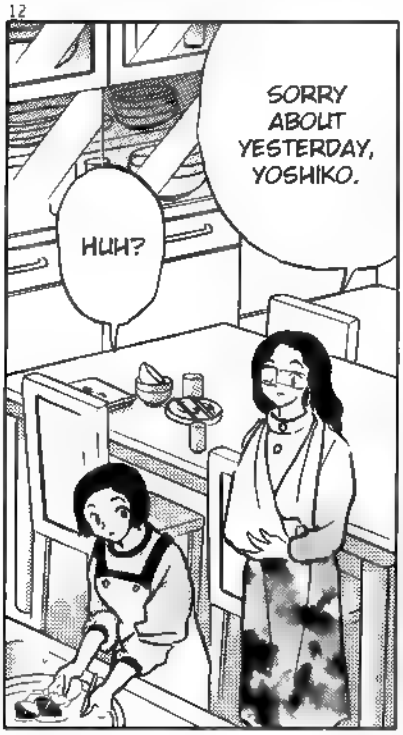
*NAMEKO=JAPANESE MUSHROOM

MISO SOUP?
HUH?

IF THAT'S THE WAY SHE FELT, WHY COULDN'T SHE HAVE TOLD ME SOONER!
AS FOR YOUR MOTHER,
TELLING ME NOW...

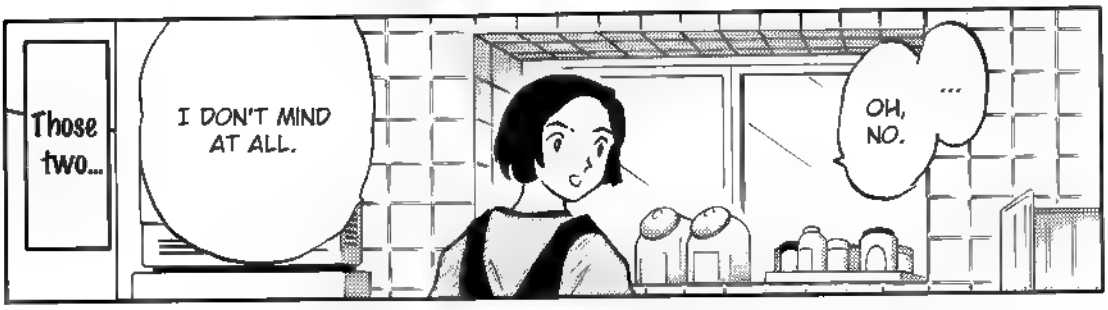

THAT'S RIDICULOUS.
THEY TOTALLY ACTED LIKE I WAS SOME WEIRDO!

12

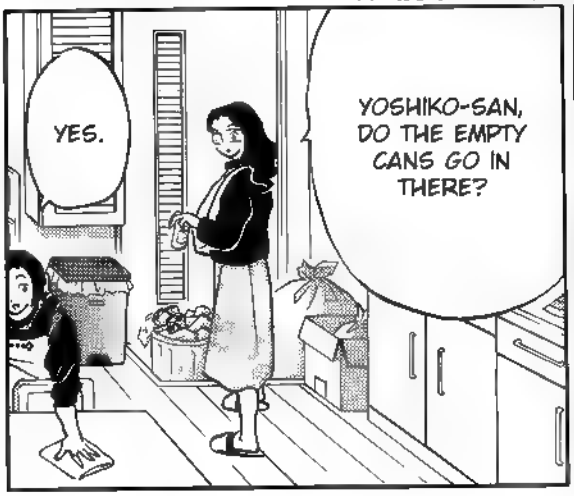

SORRY ABOUT YESTERDAY, YOSHIKO.
HUH?

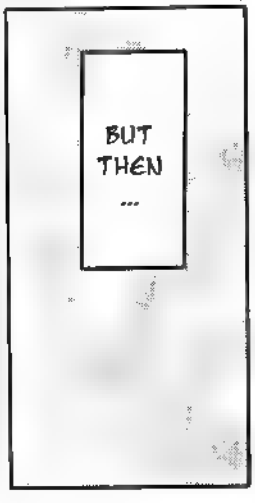
THIS SURE TAKES ME BACK.
OH, DAIKON AND FRIED TOFU...
MY WIFE PUT IN MORE INGRED-IENTS.

IN SPITE OF THAT, THE NEXT DAY...



*PRINCE OF ENKA (JAPANESE COUNTRY MUSIC)



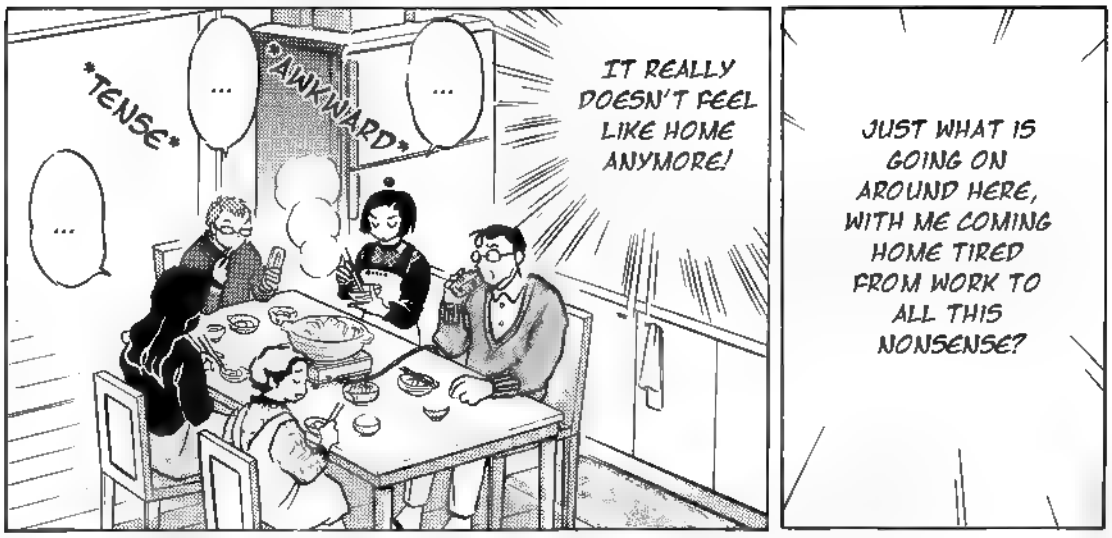


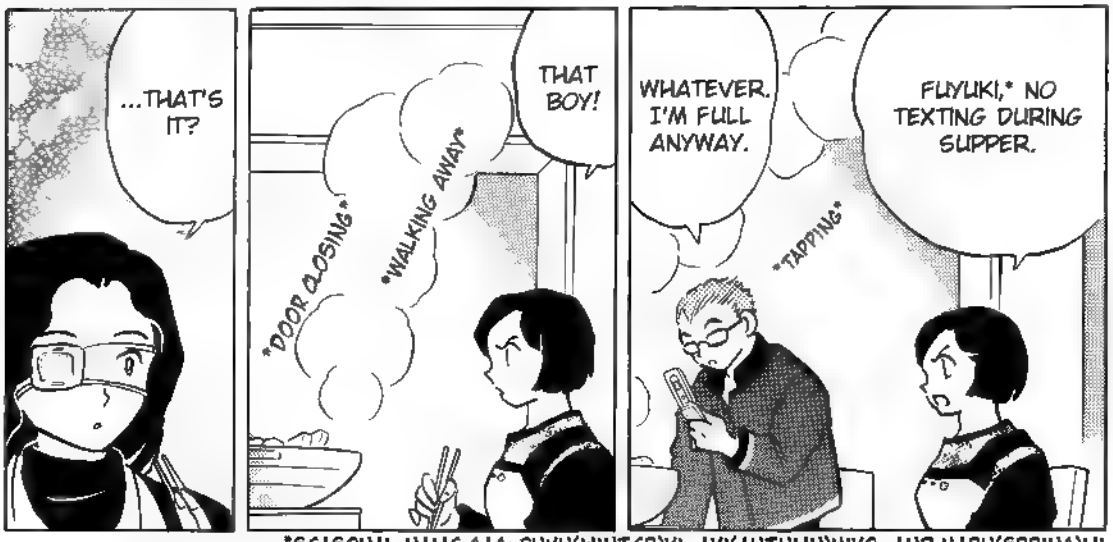
CLICK
CIGAR-RETTE BUTTS?
CRAMMED
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, HARUMI?
PHEW
14
HUH.
YOSHIKO-SAN WAS WORRIED ABOUT HIS HEALTH.
AND AKIHIKO QUIT SMOKING TOO.
YOSHIKO-SAN HATES SMOKING, SINCE IT STINKS UP THE HOUSE.
HUH? YOU MEAN I'M NOT ALLOWED TO SMOKE IN HERE?

HUH? HARUMI?
PHEW.
I GOT HOME EARLY FOR ONCE.
WHOOSH
SURE.
YOU WANT ONE?
OH, AKIHIKO!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT HERE IN THE COLD?
HUH!?
I NEVER NOTICED UNTIL NOW, 'CAUSE I ONLY VISIT AT NEW YEAR'S.
THIS JUST DOESN'T FEEL LIKE HOME ANYMORE.
I DUNNO.
MMM, THAT'S NICE.
PHEW

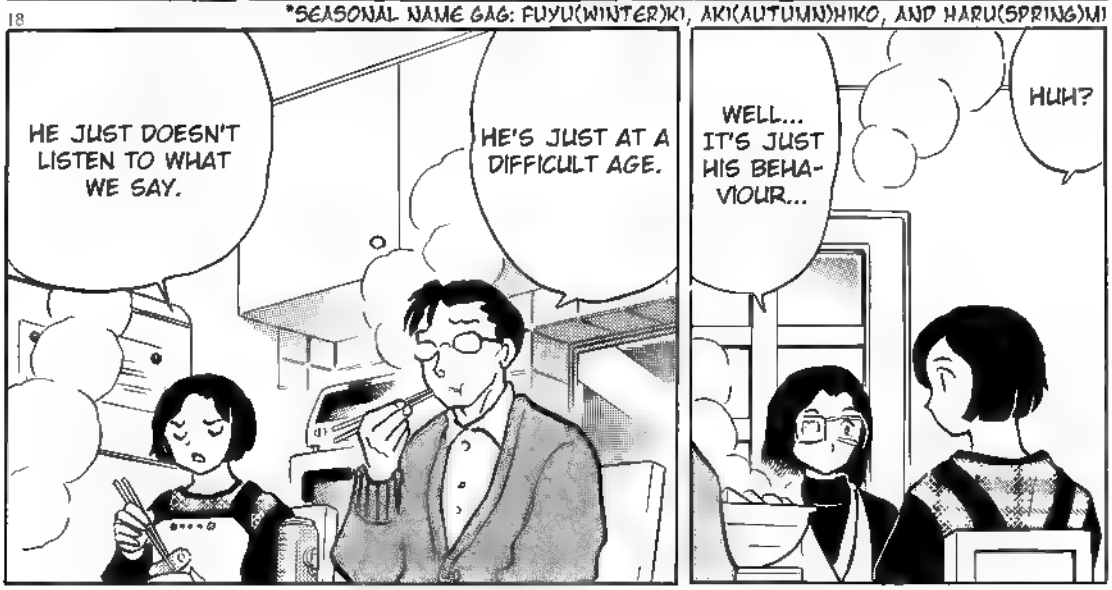
FOR STARTERS THIS REALLY ISN'T YOUR HOME ANYMORE!
IT'S MINE!
JUST WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
THAT SHE'S BEEN PUTTING UP WITH QUITE A LOT, HASN'T SHE?
SHE CARES SO MUCH ABOUT YOSHIKO-SAN'S FEELINGS,
I FEEL SORRY FOR MAMA.
IT'S LIKE THIS IS YOSHIKO-SAN'S HOUSE, ISN'T IT?
YOU AREN'T PUTTING YOUR FOOT DOWN.
WHAT...?
16
CREAK
JEEZ, GET A LOAD OF YOU TWO!
AREN'T YOU CAPABLE OF SHOWING EVEN A LITTLE RESTRAINT?
THAT- THAT'S TOTALLY WRONG!!

OH?
I DIDN'T TELL HER TO SMOKE OUTSIDE!
NOW HOLD ON!
WALKING UP
IT'S FREEZING OUT HERE, GET INSIDE NOW!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU GUYS!?
MY SISTER HAS TO PUT UP WITH JUST AS MUCH AND SMOKE OUTSIDE!
COME ON,
THIS IS GETTING TOO INSULTING!
I'VE HAD JUST ABOUT ENOUGH!
YOU SMOKED TOO, DIDN'T YOU?
DARLING.
HMM!?
SNIFFING
17
W-WHAT THE- I CAN'T EVEN HAVE ONE ANYMORE?
SNAP
ERM...

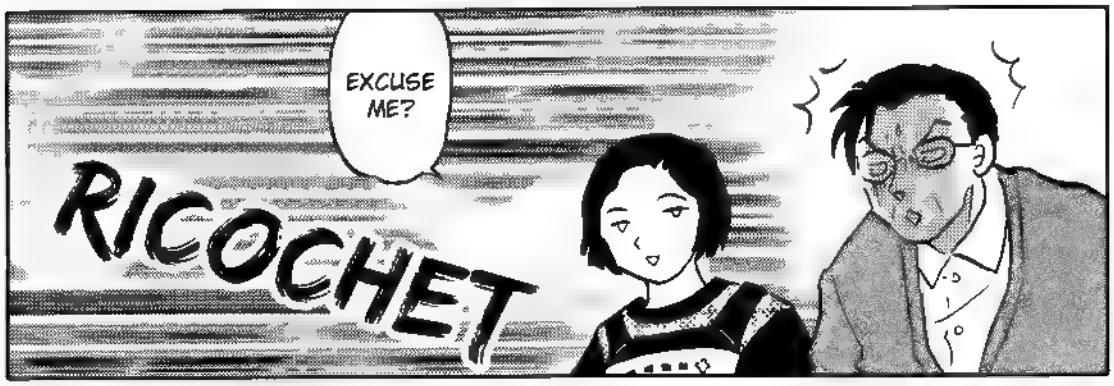

TENSE
...
AWKWARD
...
...
IT REALLY DOESN'T FEEL LIKE HOME ANYMORE!
JUST WHAT IS GOING ON AROUND HERE, WITH ME COMING HOME TIRED FROM WORK TO ALL THIS NONSENSE?



18 *SEASONAL NAME GAG: FUYU(WINTER)KI, AKI(AUTUMN)HIKO, AND HARU(SPRING)MI



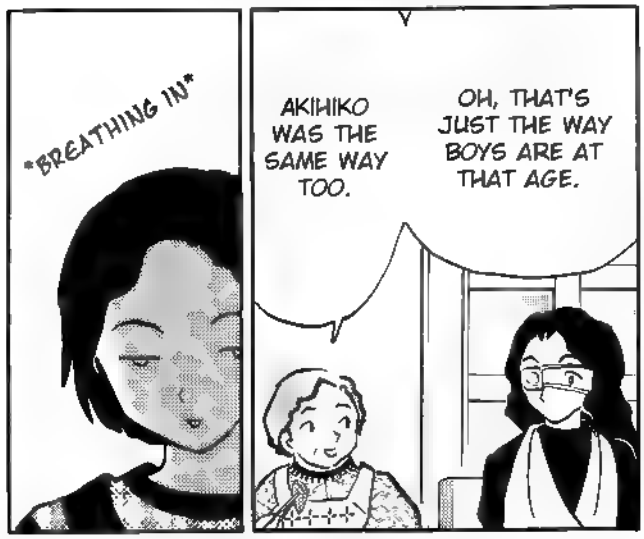
YOU'RE REALLY SPOILING HIM.
HUH.


EXCUSE ME?
RICOCHET

19

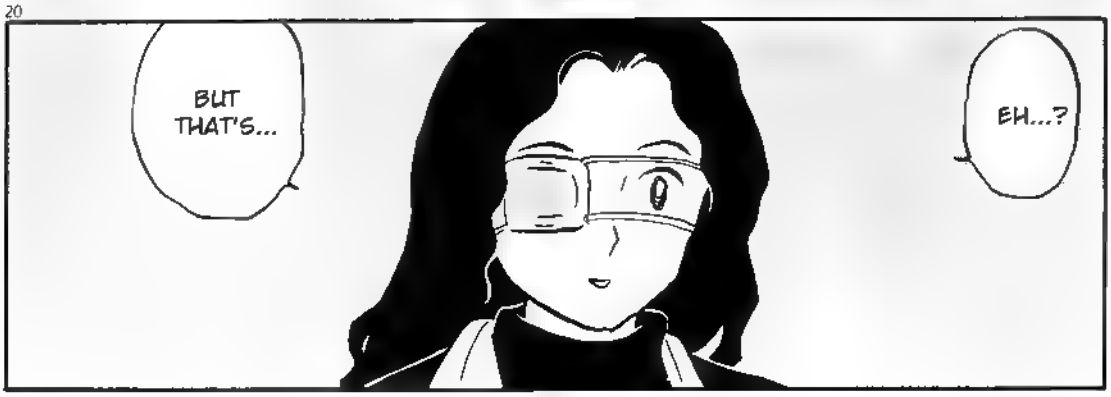
BA-DUM
BA-DUM
BA-DUM
WH- WHY IS SHE BRINGING THIS UP NOW?

I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT THIS FOR A WHILE NOW,
BUT THAT BOY JUST HAS NO AMBITION.
HE'S JUST STUCK UP THERE IN HIS ROOM BEING UNSOCIABLE.


BREATHING IN
AKIHIKO WAS THE SAME WAY TOO.
OH, THAT'S JUST THE WAY BOYS ARE AT THAT AGE.

SHE...
SHE SAID THAT!?
HARUMI-SAN, YOU'VE NEVER HAD TO RAISE CHILDREN BEFORE, HAVE YOU?
SILENCE
BUBBLE
BUBBLE

20


BUT THAT'S...
EH...?

SURPRISED
HARUMI!
RUNNING
IT'S TOO MUCH!
I'M...
I DIDN'T MEAN TO...
YOU REALLY SHOULDN'T SAY TO PEOPLE.
MUMBLING
EVEN SO, THAT KIND OF THING...
WHY WOULD YOU SAY SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
DRIP *DRIP*
21

JUST WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON ANYWAY?
COME ON, I NEVER SAID ANYTHING OF THE SORT, DID I?
LIKE THIS IS ALL MY FAULT.
YOU SAY THAT ...
STANDING
I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE!
RUNNING
NO-ONE CARES ABOUT HOW I FEEL...
I HAVE TO STAY IN THIS HOUSE ALL DAY!
THINGS ARE DIFFERENT FOR ME,
22
...
BA-DUM
BA-DUM
BA-DUM
SOBBING
IT'S NOT AS IF YOSHIKO-SAN MEANT TO HURT YOU, OR ANYTHING... BUT IT WAS PRETTY MEAN.
SOBBING

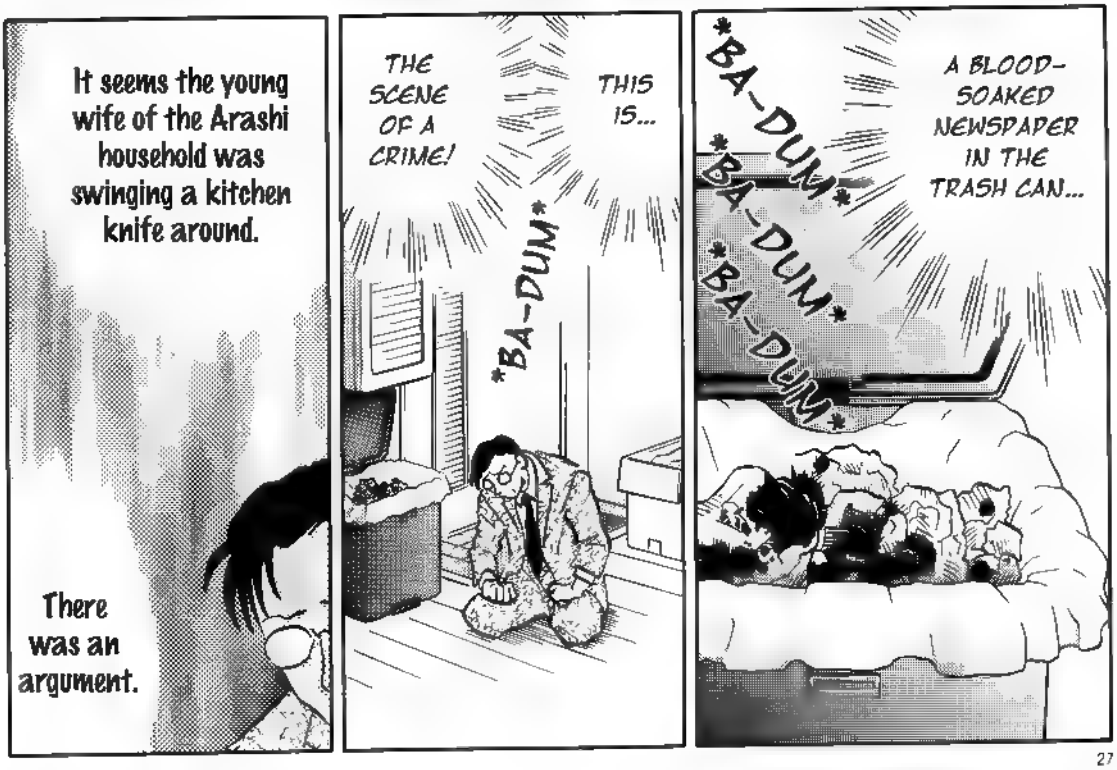
I MEAN...
WHAT'S WITH EVERYONE?
QUEASY
WHAT'S GOING ON?
I HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING WRONG HERE.
IF ANY-THING,
DING
DING
DING
I WORK MY HARDEST EVERY DAY FOR MY FAMILY'S SAKE.
I HAVE TO SAY SOMETHING!
I'M THE ONE WHO'S HAD ENOUGH!

RUSHING
I'M KICKING MY SISTER OUT!
I CAN'T LET MOM SPOIL HER TOO MUCH, EITHER!
STOMPING
YOU TOO, YOSHIKO!
YOU SHOULD BE MORE GRATEFUL TO ME.
YOU COULD AT LEAST LET ME SMOKE!
24
PITCH BLACK
HUH!?
I WON'T JUST LET DO WHATEVER YOU LIKE IN MY HOUSE!!!
HEY, ALL OF YOU!!
FLIP

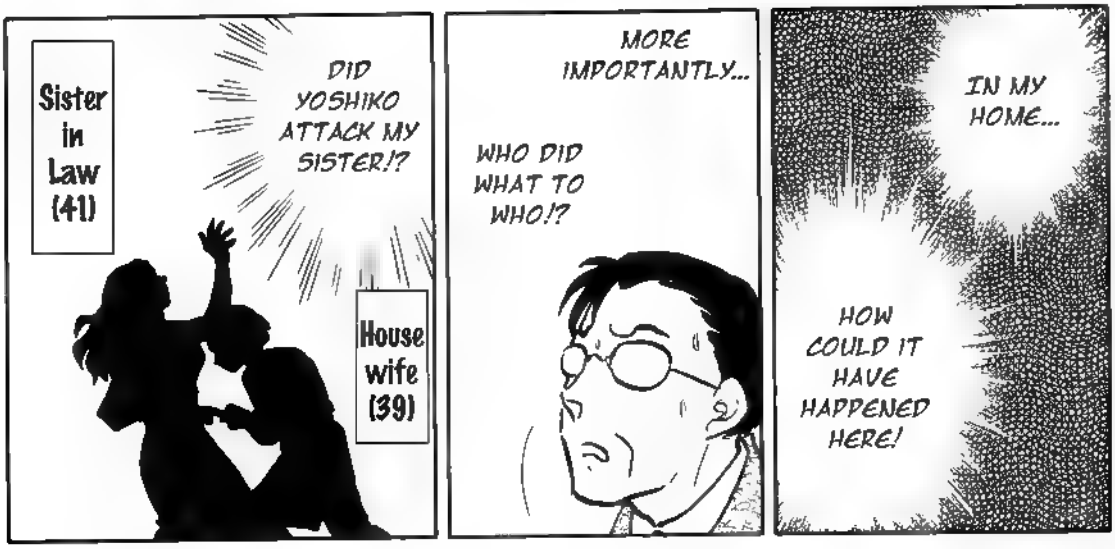
HUH?
KA-CHAK
CLICK
HOW COME ALL THE LIGHTS ARE OFF?
25
BLOOD ...?!
WHAT...?!
ZOOM
DROP

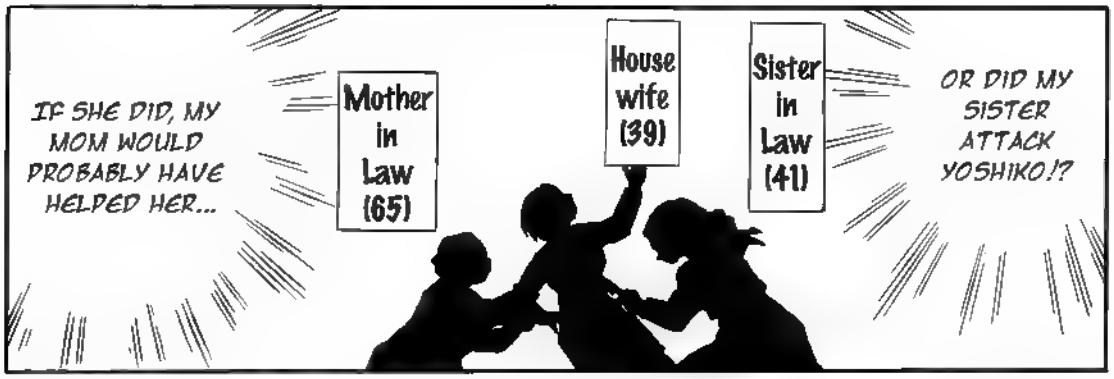
AND WHERE'S MY SISTER!?
RUNNING
YOSHIKO'S GONE!
The final incident.
BA-DUM *BA-DUM*
FUYUKI AND MOM ARE GONE TOO...
BA-DUM *BA-DUM* *BA-DUM* *BA-DUM* *BA-DUM*
GOTTA CALM DOWN...
CALM DOWN!
YOSHIKO OR MY SISTER...
I CAN'T GET THROUGH TO THEM...
Cannot be reached at this time...
The number you have dialed
TH-THAT'S RIGHT, THEY PROBABLY JUST WENT OUT SOMEWHERE...
"BEEP"

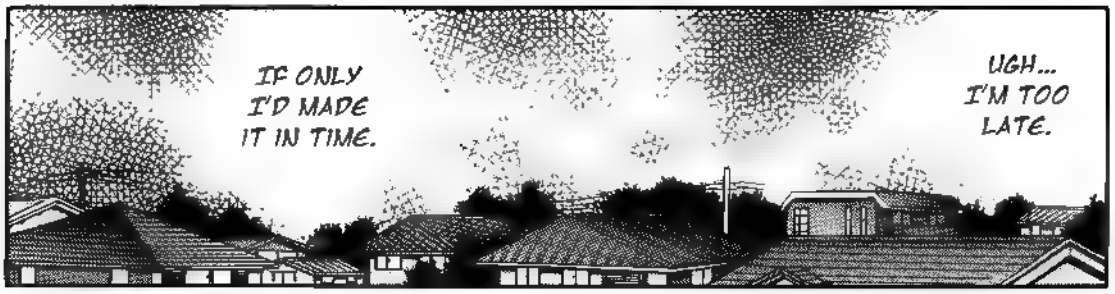
BA-DUM
BA-DUM
BA-DUM
A BLOOD-STAINED KNIFE...


It seems the young wife of the Arashi household was swinging a kitchen knife around.
There was an argument.
THE SCENE OF A CRIME!
THIS IS...
BA-DUM
BA-DUM
BA-DUM
BA-DUM
A BLOOD-SOAKED NEWSPAPER IN THE TRASH CAN...

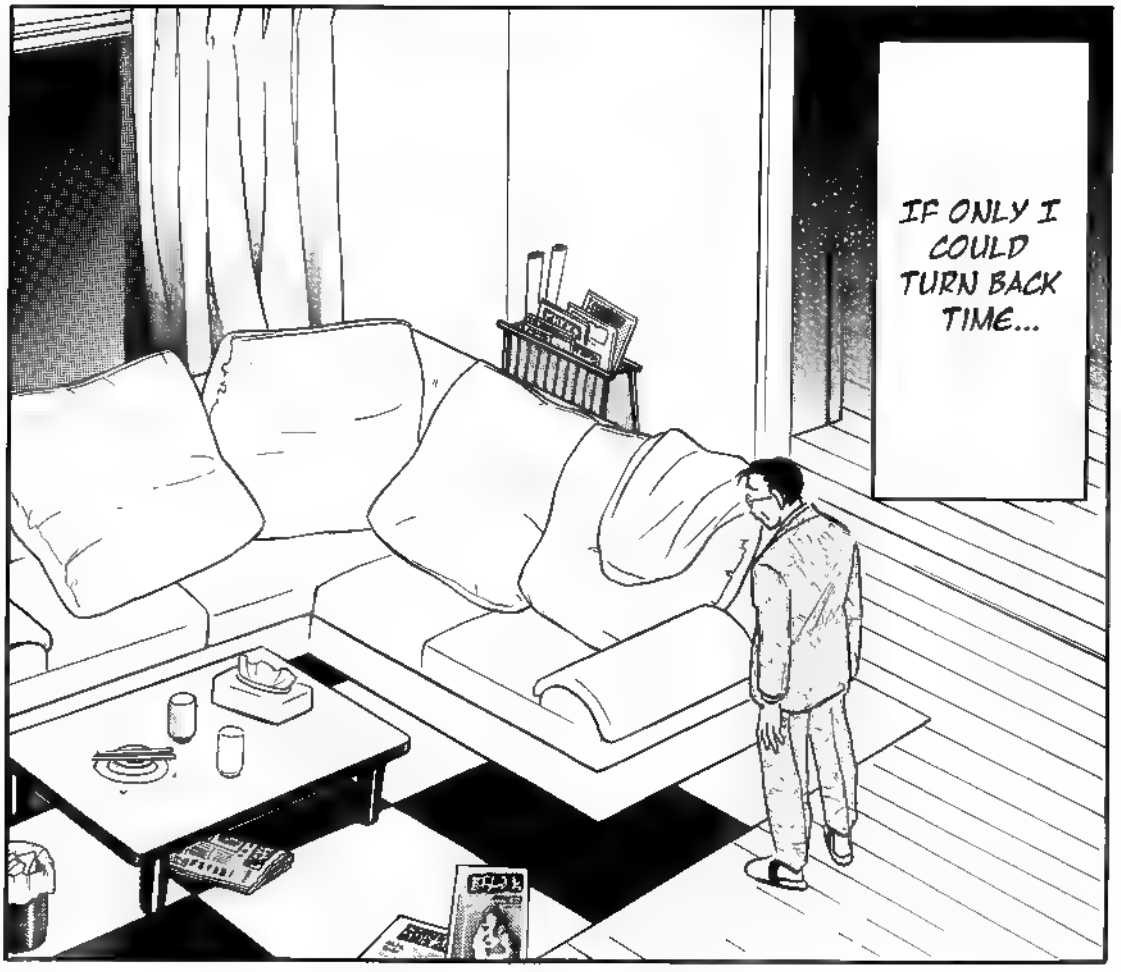
27


Sister in Law (41)
DID YOSHIKO ATTACK MY SISTER!?
House wife (39)
MORE IMPORTANTLY...
WHO DID WHAT TO WHO!?
IN MY HOME...
HOW COULD IT HAVE HAPPENED HERE!

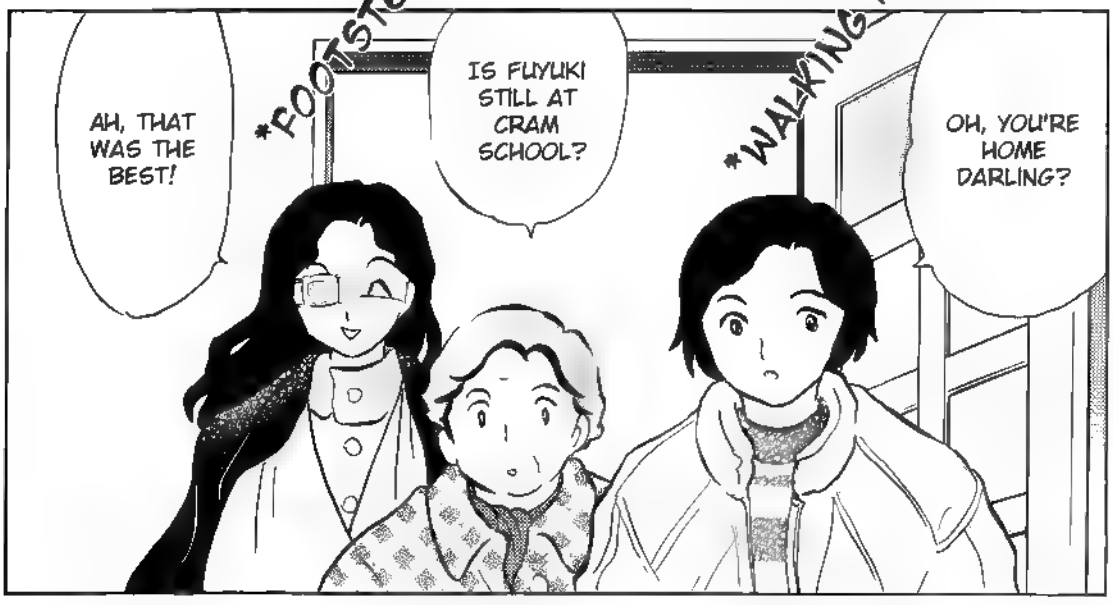

IF SHE DID, MY MOM WOULD PROBABLY HAVE HELPED HER...
Mother in Law (65)
House wife (39)
Sister in Law (41)
OR DID MY SISTER ATTACK YOSHIKO!?

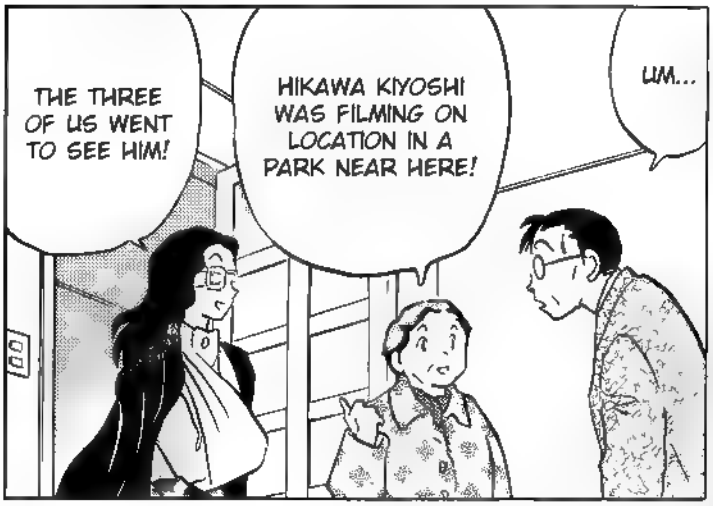

IF ONLY I'D MADE IT IN TIME.
UGH... I'M TOO LATE.

28


IF ONLY I COULD TURN BACK TIME...

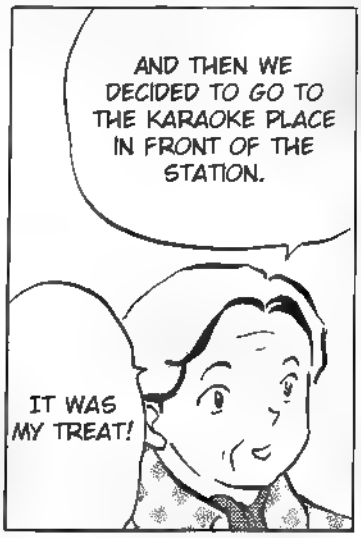
IF ONLY I'D BEEN MORE RELIABLE...
IF ONLY WE'D TALKED IT OVER FROM THE START.
I SHOULD HAVE LISTENED TO MY WIFE PROPERLY...
29
JUST WHEN DID I MESS THINGS UP SO BAD...
I KNOW I LOCKED IT PROPERLY, AT LEAST.
HUH, THE FRONT DOOR WASN'T LOCKED.
FOOTSTEPS


FOOTSTEPS
AH, THAT WAS THE BEST!
IS FUYUKI STILL AT CRAM SCHOOL?
WALKING IN
OH, YOU'RE HOME DARLING?


THE THREE OF US WENT TO SEE HIM!
HIKAWA KIYOSHI WAS FILMING ON LOCATION IN A PARK NEAR HERE!
UM...

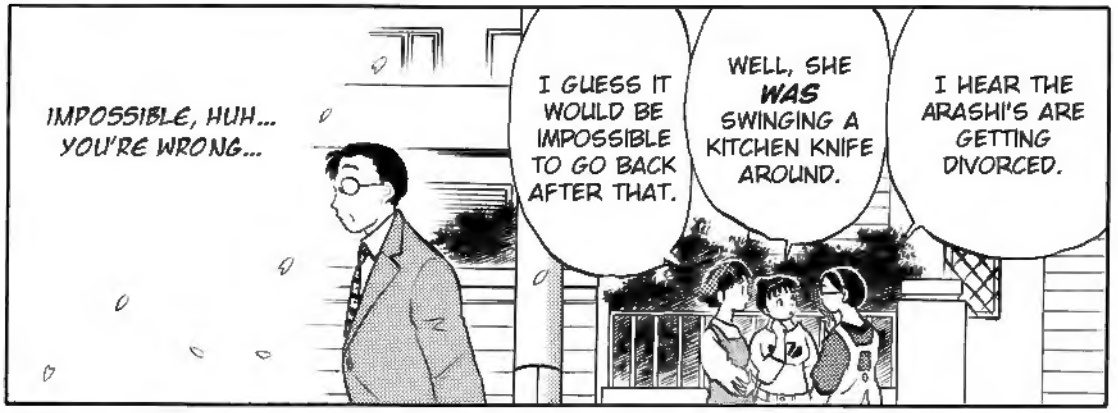
30

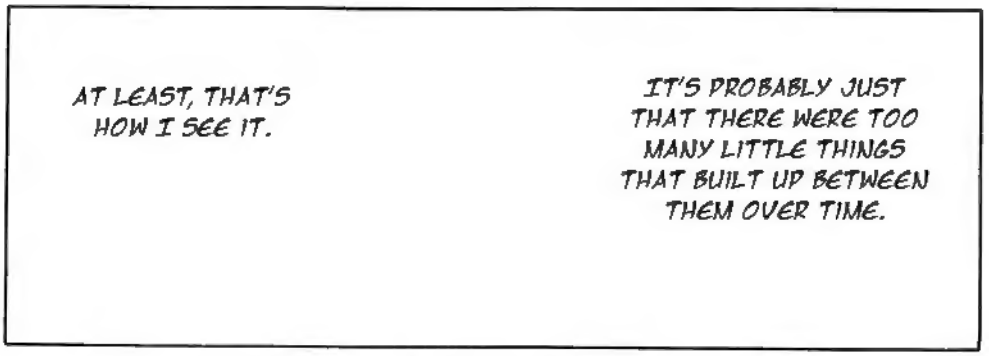
IT SEEMS THAT HARUMI AND YOSHIKO-SAN WERE LOOKING FOR A CHANCE TO PATCH THINGS UP.
"WHISPER"


AND THEN WE DECIDED TO GO TO THE KARAOKE PLACE IN FRONT OF THE STATION.
IT WAS MY TREAT!

THUNK
RUSTLING
PLOP
I'LL QUICKLY MAKE DINNER!
I RAN OUT JUST IN THE MIDDLE OF PREPARING IT...
CLATTER
SCREECH
WEEOOOO
WEEOOOO
WEEOOOO
SO WE'RE HAVING FISH TONIGHT...
OH...
POLICE!
WE'RE HERE ABOUT A MISSING PERSON?
MARCHING
HUH?
A KILLER DUMPED A BODY?

I'M EXHAUSTED AFTER PUTTING UP WITH SO MUCH!
AH—
Once her injury had healed and her husband returned, my sister went back to her home.


IMPOSSIBLE, HUH... YOU'RE WRONG...
I GUESS IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO GO BACK AFTER THAT.
WELL, SHE ***WAS*** SWINGING A KITCHEN KNIFE AROUND.
I HEAR THE ARASHI'S ARE GETTING DIVORCED.



Takahashi Rumiko Rumic Theater [Unmei no Tori]

—End—

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